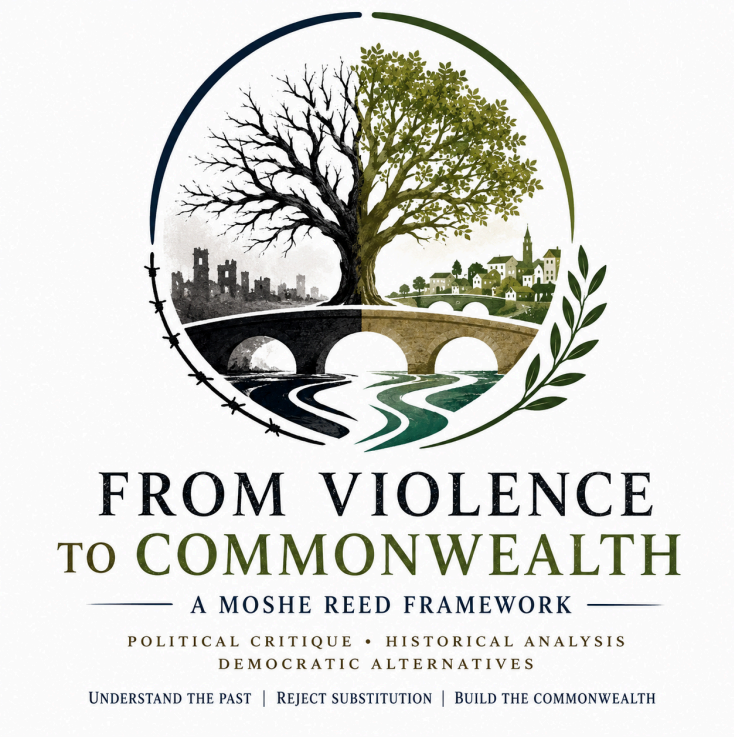
From Violence to Commonwealth

A Critical History of ETA, the Basque Conflict, and the Moshe Reed Alternative


FROM VIOLENCE
TO COMMONWEALTH
A MOSHE REED FRAMEWORK
POLITICAL CRITIQUE • HISTORICAL ANALYSIS
DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVES
UNDERSTAND THE PAST | REJECT SUBSTITUTION | BUILD THE COMMONWEALTH

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Reverend Moshe Reed, Servant and Prophet of Logos

Dedication

To the people who refused to surrender their dignity, and to those who discovered that dignity cannot be built upon fear.

To the victims of political violence,
to the families who carried memory through silence,
to those who resisted dictatorship and repression,
and to those who later found the courage to reject the endless cycle of retaliation.

To every people struggling to preserve their language, culture, and right to self-government without surrendering their humanity to the state, the party, the vanguard, or the gun.

To the dissenter who refused to be intimidated.

To the worker who organized.

To the teacher who preserved a language.

To the journalist who exposed abuse.

To the prisoner who retained human dignity.

To the victim who demanded truth.

To the former militant who chose another path.

To the citizen who understood that political opponents need not become permanent enemies.

And to the generations who must inherit history without inheriting hatred.

A people is larger than an organization.
A cause is larger than a tactic.
Human freedom is larger than every institution that claims to speak in its name.

— Moshe Reed

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A compelling exploration of healing, creation, and Christian ethics through Victorious Logos Theology, presenting cannabis as a case study in faithful stewardship under the lordship of Jesus Christ, the eternal Logos.

Preface

The Mountains Remember

There are lands in which history appears to remain close to the surface.

It is present in the names of villages, in the language spoken between generations, in songs whose origins have been forgotten, in ruined walls, in graves, in monuments, and in the mountains that stand silently above the changing political orders of humanity.

The Basque Country is such a land.

Before there was Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, there was a people.

Before there was armed struggle, there was memory.

Before there were clandestine organizations, political prisoners, police operations, bombings, assassinations, demonstrations, and declarations, there existed the older question of belonging: Who are we? What makes a people? What does a community have the right to preserve? What authority does a state possess over the language, culture, institutions, and political future of those living within its borders?

These questions are older than ETA, and they survived ETA.

This distinction is essential.

The history of a people must never be reduced to the history of an armed organization claiming to act in its name. Likewise, the history of an armed organization cannot be understood apart from the conditions that gave birth to it. To erase the first truth is to confuse a nation with a clandestine movement. To erase the second is to replace history with moral simplicity.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects both errors.

It refuses romantic mythology.

It also refuses convenient amnesia.

It rejects the belief that political violence becomes sacred merely because those committing it speak the language of liberation. Yet it equally rejects the mythology of the innocent state: the belief that established governments stand outside violence, history, coercion, repression, and domination.

The state is not sacred.

The revolution is not sacred.

The nation is not sacred.

The organization is not sacred.

Human beings are not raw material for any of them.

This book begins from that principle.

The history of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna is a history of resistance and coercion, courage and fear, political aspiration and moral catastrophe, dictatorship and democracy, nationalism and socialism, cultural survival and revolutionary absolutism. It is the history of a movement that emerged in opposition to an authoritarian state and continued its campaign into a profoundly changed political environment.

It is therefore a history of transformation.

The movement changed.

The state changed.

Basque society changed.

Spain changed.

Europe changed.

Yet organizations do not always change at the same speed as the worlds surrounding them. A political structure created for one historical reality may continue to act according to assumptions formed decades earlier. A tactic may become an identity. An instrument may become a tradition. A temporary method may become an institution.

Eventually, the organization may no longer merely possess the weapon.

The weapon possesses the organization.

This is one of the central themes of this book.

Moshe Reed Thought approaches revolutionary history through the relationship between **cause, consciousness, structure, and consequence**.

Nothing emerges from nothing.

Political movements are produced through historical conditions. They emerge from contradictions already present within society. They develop through relationships between institutions, classes, cultures, generations, memories, economic structures, and political possibilities.

To say this is not to eliminate responsibility.

Understanding is not acquittal.

Explanation is not celebration.

Context is not absolution.

A person who studies the conditions that produce political violence does not thereby endorse violence. On the contrary, without understanding those conditions, societies condemn themselves to repetition.

The shallow historian asks only:

Who fired the weapon?

The serious historian must also ask:

What historical world made the weapon politically meaningful?

Who constructed that world?

Who benefited from it?

Who suffered within it?

Why did some choose peaceful resistance while others chose armed struggle?

Why did some abandon violence while others continued?

What happens to a revolutionary movement when the enemy against which it originally defined itself changes?

What happens when an organization begins to believe that it alone represents a people?

And what happens when liberation becomes something imposed upon the very population supposedly being liberated?

These questions guide the present work.

I. A People Cannot Be Reduced to an Organization

The Basque people are not ETA.

This should be obvious, yet political conflict repeatedly destroys obvious distinctions.

A people contains workers and employers, farmers and intellectuals, believers and unbelievers, conservatives and socialists, nationalists and non-nationalists, revolutionaries and pacifists, centralists and autonomists, people who seek independence and people who do not.

No organization can contain the totality of a living population.

The moment an organization declares itself the exclusive historical voice of a people, danger begins.

A living community speaks with many voices.

An organization speaks through a program.

A community changes organically.

An organization preserves structures.

A community contains contradiction.

An absolutist organization experiences contradiction as disloyalty.

This difference is central to Moshe Reed Thought.

The people must remain greater than the party.

The worker must remain greater than the ideology supposedly representing the worker.

The community must remain greater than the state governing the community.

The nation must remain greater than the military organization claiming to defend the nation.

Humanity must remain greater than every abstraction humanity creates.

The tragedy of modern politics is the repeated inversion of this relationship.

The institution becomes sacred, while the person becomes expendable.

The flag becomes sacred, while the village becomes expendable.

The revolution becomes sacred, while the worker becomes expendable.

National unity becomes sacred, while minority cultures become expendable.

Security becomes sacred, while law becomes expendable.

History becomes sacred, while truth becomes expendable.

Moshe Reed Thought begins by reversing the hierarchy.

Institutions exist for living beings.

Living beings do not exist for institutions.

This principle applies equally to the centralized state and the revolutionary organization.

II. The Violence of the State and the Violence Against the State

Political language often divides violence into two categories.

The first is called order.

The second is called violence.

When a state arrests, imprisons, disciplines, surveils, suppresses, or kills, its actions are often described through administrative language. When an insurgent organization acts violently, its actions are described through explicitly moral language.

The reverse distortion also occurs.

Revolutionary movements may describe their own violence as resistance, justice, armed propaganda, revolutionary necessity, or historical inevitability, while describing every action of the state as terror.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects both vocabularies of self-exemption.

Violence must be examined according to what it does to actual human beings.

The uniform of the perpetrator does not determine the suffering of the victim.

The ideology of the perpetrator does not reverse death.

The legal status of an institution does not guarantee its morality.

The revolutionary status of an organization does not guarantee its morality.

There can be unlawful state violence.

There can be unjust revolutionary violence.

There can be resistance to oppression.

There can also be domination performed in the name of resistance.

The world is more difficult than propaganda permits.

This difficulty must be accepted rather than escaped.

The authoritarian state desires a simple story: authority represents order and opposition represents chaos.

The absolutist revolutionary desires another simple story: the revolution represents the people and everyone opposing the revolution represents reaction.

Both eliminate complexity because complexity threatens power.

History must recover what power removes.

III. The Birth of Militancy

Armed movements do not appear merely because someone reads a revolutionary book.

Ideas matter, but ideas enter worlds already shaped by experience.

Political consciousness develops through the interaction of memory and present conditions. A generation inherits stories from its parents and grandparents. It encounters institutions in its own time. It interprets the distance between inherited identity and political reality.

From this distance, movements emerge.

Under authoritarian conditions, peaceful political participation may be restricted or impossible. Cultural expression may become political. Language may become resistance. Music may become resistance. Publishing may become resistance. Teaching children the language of their ancestors may become resistance.

The boundary between culture and politics begins to disappear.

In such conditions, a generation may conclude that ordinary politics has failed before ordinary politics has ever truly been permitted.

This conclusion can become the beginning of militancy.

But beginnings do not determine endings.

A movement may emerge under dictatorship and continue under democracy.

An organization may be shaped by repression and later reproduce coercive relationships within its own social environment.

A movement may begin with a demand that people be allowed to speak and eventually create circumstances in which some become afraid to speak.

This is the paradox of revolutionary history.

The oppressed are not metaphysically incapable of oppression.

Victimhood does not create permanent innocence.

Suffering does not guarantee wisdom.

A person who has been dominated understands the experience of domination, but this knowledge alone does not prevent that person from dominating another.

The same is true of organizations.

For Moshe Reed Thought, liberation therefore requires more than changing who possesses power.

It requires transforming the structure and consciousness of power itself.

IV. National Liberation and the Human Person

National liberation movements arise from a fundamental claim:

A people should possess meaningful authority over its collective life.

This claim deserves serious consideration.

Political communities are not merely economic zones. Human beings inherit languages, memories, cultural practices, landscapes, stories, and forms of belonging. Attempts to erase these attachments in the name of administrative efficiency or centralized nationalism often produce resistance.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore rejects cultural annihilation.

A language should not disappear because a bureaucracy considers another language more convenient.

A people should not be humiliated for remembering its ancestors.

Local communities should not become powerless administrative objects governed entirely from distant centers.

Uniformity is not unity.

Centralization is not solidarity.

Obedience is not peace.

Silence is not reconciliation.

Yet national liberation contains its own danger.

The nation is an abstraction constructed from millions of concrete lives.

When the abstraction becomes more important than the lives composing it, nationalism becomes destructive.

A homeland exists for its people.

The people do not exist as sacrificial material for the homeland.

A language survives because people speak it.

A culture survives because people live it.

A community survives because relationships continue across generations.

No bomb can speak a language.

No bullet can raise a child.

No clandestine organization can substitute itself for the entire social life of a people.

The nation must therefore remain human in scale.

This is the nationalism that Moshe Reed Thought can recognize: a nationalism of cultural dignity, popular self-government, historical memory, local responsibility, and cooperation between peoples.

It rejects the nationalism of racial superiority.

It rejects the nationalism of forced assimilation.

It rejects the nationalism of imperial conquest.

It rejects the nationalism that transforms neighboring peoples into permanent enemies.

It also rejects the nationalism that demands unquestioning obedience to armed organizations.

The right of a people to exist does not create the right of an organization to control that people.

V. The Revolutionary Temptation

Every revolutionary movement faces a temptation.

It begins by saying:

We fight for the people.

Later it may say:

We understand the interests of the people better than the people themselves.

Finally it may say:

Those among the people who oppose us are enemies of the people.

This progression is one of the oldest paths from liberation to domination.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies the problem as **substitutionism**.

The organization substitutes itself for the movement.

The movement substitutes itself for the class.

The class substitutes itself for humanity.

The leadership substitutes itself for the organization.

Eventually, a small number of individuals claim historical authority over millions.

The revolutionary becomes a priest of inevitability.

History becomes scripture.

Ideology becomes theology.

The party becomes church.

Discipline becomes obedience.

Dissent becomes heresy.

Violence becomes sacrament.

The future becomes heaven.

The dead become offerings upon its altar.

This pattern is not limited to one ideology.

Fascist movements have followed it.

Nationalist movements have followed it.

Communist movements have followed it.

Religious movements have followed it.

Imperial states have followed it.

Liberal states have sometimes followed analogous patterns when security institutions escape meaningful accountability.

The form changes.

The psychological structure remains recognizable.

The antidote is not political passivity.

The antidote is permanent accountability.

No revolutionary organization should possess immunity from criticism.

No state should investigate itself as though power naturally produces honesty.

No party should be confused with the working class.

No leader should be confused with history.

No nation should be confused with its government.

No government should be confused with its police.

No police force should be confused with justice itself.

The distance between institution and ideal must always remain visible.

VI. The Meaning of Revolutionary Failure

A revolutionary organization can fail in several ways.

It can fail militarily.

It can fail politically.

It can fail morally.

It can fail historically.

These forms of failure are not identical.

A movement may be militarily defeated while its political demands later become widely accepted.

A movement may survive militarily while becoming politically isolated.

An organization may achieve some objectives while morally destroying itself.

A movement may disappear while the contradictions that produced it continue.

The history of ETA requires all these categories.

The political questions surrounding Basque identity, autonomy, language, and sovereignty cannot be reduced to the fate of an armed organization.

Likewise, the end of an armed campaign does not erase its victims.

Historical change does not reverse consequences.

A movement's intentions cannot substitute for the experience of those harmed by its actions.

For Moshe Reed Thought, revolutionary success must be measured by the life created, not merely the enemy destroyed.

Does the worker possess greater dignity?

Does the community possess greater control over its institutions?

Can children inherit language and culture freely?

Can people disagree without fear?

Can political opponents exist?

Can the individual refuse the demands of the organization?

Can communities govern themselves?

Can truth be spoken when it embarrasses those in power?

Can victims be remembered even when their suffering disrupts the preferred historical narrative?

If the answer is no, then liberation remains incomplete.

A flag may change while domination survives.

VII. Memory Against Propaganda

Political conflict divides memory.

Each side remembers its dead.

Each side remembers its prisons.

Each side remembers its fear.

Each side remembers the crimes committed against it.

Each side develops explanations for the crimes committed by its own institutions.

This produces competing moral universes.

One family remembers a relative killed by an armed organization.

Another remembers a relative tortured or unlawfully abused by state agents.

One community remembers dictatorship.

Another remembers bombing.

One remembers cultural suppression.

Another remembers assassination.

Propaganda demands a choice between memories.

History must refuse.

Recognition of one victim does not erase another.

Condemnation of one crime does not legitimize another.

The pain of a family does not become less real because someone can provide political context for the death.

Context explains.

It does not resurrect.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore proposes a universal discipline of memory.

Remember the person before the category.

Before the word policeman, remember the human being.

Before the word militant, remember the human being.

Before the word nationalist, remember the human being.

Before the word socialist, remember the human being.

Before the word Spanish, remember the human being.

Before the word Basque, remember the human being.

This does not mean abandoning political analysis.

It means preventing analysis from becoming moral anesthesia.

The purpose of political thought is not to make suffering invisible.

It is to understand the structures that produce suffering and to build conditions in which they are less likely to return.

VIII. The Mountain and the Organization

Organizations are temporary.

Landscapes endure beyond them.

Governments rise and fall.

Flags change.

Borders move.

Parties divide.

Manifestos are written and forgotten.

Prisons open and close.

Generations inherit stories whose original participants have disappeared.

The mountain remains.

This is why the mountain serves as the central image of this book.

The mountain does not belong to the state merely because the state draws a boundary around it.

The mountain does not belong to the revolutionary merely because the revolutionary hides within it.

The mountain belongs to no ideology.

It stands beyond propaganda.

Yet human beings give landscapes meaning.

They name them.

They walk them.

They bury their dead near them.

They tell stories about them.

They see them from childhood windows.

They leave and remember them.

They return and discover that memory has transformed both the place and themselves.

A homeland is created through this relationship between place and memory.

Political authority must respect this relationship.

But memory can also become a prison.

A people can become trapped within old injuries.

The dead can be recruited into battles they never chose.

Children can inherit enemies they have never met.

History can become ammunition.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that memory must serve consciousness rather than vengeance.

To remember is not necessarily to repeat.

To forgive is not necessarily to forget.

To understand is not necessarily to excuse.

To reconcile is not necessarily to surrender.

A mature political community must be capable of holding these distinctions.

IX. Beyond the Centralized State and the Armed Vanguard

The final purpose of this book is not merely historical.

History matters because the structures that produced past conflicts remain recognizable in new forms.

Centralized states still struggle with questions of cultural autonomy.

Minority languages still disappear.

National movements still emerge.

Revolutionary organizations still claim exclusive authority to represent populations.

Governments still use security as justification for secrecy.

Political movements still divide the world into pure allies and absolute enemies.

The lesson cannot simply be that resistance is wrong.

Nor can the lesson be that resistance is always justified.

The question is what kind of resistance produces genuine liberation.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes a politics of **commonwealth, decentralization, cultural dignity, social solidarity, worker participation, municipal democracy, cooperative economics, and accountable power**.

It opposes the isolated individualism of capitalist society, in which human beings are reduced to consumers and workers competing within structures they do not control.

It also opposes bureaucratic collectivism, in which the individual disappears beneath institutions claiming to act for the collective good.

The commonwealth must be built from below.

The neighborhood.

The workplace.

The cooperative.

The municipality.

The region.

The cultural community.

These institutions should federate upward rather than receive all authority downward.

Such a society does not eliminate conflict.

Nothing can.

But it creates political forms through which conflict can be negotiated without requiring either forced uniformity or permanent civil war.

The future must be more imaginative than the choice between centralization and fragmentation.

Solidarity does not require sameness.

Unity does not require uniformity.

Autonomy does not require isolation.

Identity does not require hatred.

Resistance does not require nihilism.

Socialism does not require bureaucracy.

Community does not require obedience.

A nation does not require an enemy.

X. The Question This Book Asks

This book asks neither whether ETA was composed entirely of monsters nor whether it was composed entirely of heroes.

Such questions belong to mythology.

History asks more difficult questions.

How does a cultural movement become a revolutionary movement?

How does a revolutionary movement become an armed organization?

How does armed struggle change the people participating in it?

How does the state respond?

How does repression strengthen militancy?

How does militancy strengthen repression?

How does a cycle become self-sustaining?

How does an organization justify continuing after the world around it changes?

How does a community remember multiple forms of suffering?

How can legitimate demands survive the failure of violent strategies?

How can political movements resist domination without constructing new forms of domination?

These are the questions that matter beyond the specific history examined here.

The reader should not enter this book seeking saints.

The reader should not enter seeking demons.

The reader should enter seeking causes, contradictions, consequences, and human beings.

There will be courage in this history.

There will also be cruelty.

There will be resistance.

There will also be domination.

There will be idealism.

There will be calculation.

There will be solidarity.

There will be fear.

There will be people who believed history had given them a mission.

There will be people who wanted only to survive history.

All must be remembered.

The mountains remember dictatorship.

The mountains remember the forbidden word spoken quietly.

The mountains remember the clandestine meeting.

The mountains remember the prisoner.

The mountains remember the policeman.

The mountains remember the militant.

The mountains remember the civilian.

The mountains remember the funeral.

The mountains remember the silence afterward.

But mountains cannot interpret memory.

That responsibility belongs to us.

And interpretation carries an ethical obligation.

We must understand without worshipping.

We must condemn without simplifying.

We must remember without inheriting hatred.

We must preserve identity without constructing enemies.

We must resist domination without becoming its reflection.

The ultimate lesson of this history is not that human beings should abandon struggle.

There are conditions against which struggle is necessary.

The lesson is that every struggle must continually ask what kind of human being it is creating, what kind of society it is preparing, and whether its methods are quietly destroying the future it claims to seek.

A homeland liberated through fear may remain imprisoned by fear.

A revolution built upon silence may produce another silence.

A movement that begins by defending the dignity of a people may lose its purpose if it forgets the dignity of the person standing before it.

The people are greater than the organization.

Humanity is greater than the state.

Life is greater than ideology.

And no liberation worthy of the name can forget this.

The mountains remember.

Our responsibility is to understand what they have witnessed.

Chapter 1

Euskal Herria: The Historical Homeland

Before the modern state drew its administrative lines across maps, human communities already possessed names for themselves and for the lands in which they lived.

Before nationalism became an ideology, belonging existed.

Before political parties formulated programs, people knew the valleys in which their families had lived, the mountains that marked the horizon, the rivers that crossed their settlements, the seasonal rhythms of work, the names of neighboring villages, and the language in which childhood itself was first understood.

The history of the Basque people begins within this deeper world of belonging.

The term **Euskal Herria** carries a meaning that cannot be reduced entirely to the boundaries of any contemporary administrative unit. It refers, in cultural and linguistic terms, to the land associated with the Basque people and their language, Euskara. Its meaning belongs simultaneously to geography, culture, language, history, and political imagination.

This complexity is important.

A homeland is not merely a state.

A homeland may exist without sovereignty.

A state may contain several homelands.

A border may possess legal authority without exhausting the historical identities of the people living around it.

The relationship between people, land, and political authority is therefore never as simple as official maps suggest.

Through Moshe Reed Thought, Euskal Herria becomes a case study in one of the fundamental problems of political philosophy: **What is the relationship between a living cultural community and the state structures that claim jurisdiction over it?**

This question would eventually become central to the emergence of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna.

But ETA came much later.

The people came first.

I. The Land Before the Organization

The Basque historical and cultural region lies around the western Pyrenees and the Bay of Biscay, spanning territories now governed within both Spain and France.

This geographical reality would later become politically significant. Modern states divided a cultural region through international boundaries, administrative systems, educational institutions, and different political histories.

Yet cultural memory does not always follow administrative lines.

Families, dialects, traditions, economic relationships, and historical consciousness may cross the boundaries established by governments.

This does not mean that every inhabitant of a culturally defined region possesses the same political identity.

No population is ideologically uniform.

Within the territories associated with Euskal Herria there have always been competing political visions. Some people have supported independence. Others have favored autonomy. Others have identified primarily with Spain or France. Still others have held layered identities in which local, Basque, Spanish, French, European, religious, and class identities coexist.

This plurality must be remembered.

One of the central errors of political absolutism is the attempt to transform cultural identity into compulsory political identity.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this transformation.

A Basque-speaking person does not automatically belong to one political ideology.

A worker does not automatically belong to one political party.

A religious believer does not automatically belong to one political movement.

A nation cannot be treated as though millions of people possess one mind.

A people is a living contradiction.

It contains disagreement.

It contains memory and forgetting.

It contains tradition and rebellion.

It contains those who remain and those who leave.

It contains those who desire independence and those who fear it.

It contains radicals, moderates, conservatives, socialists, anarchists, liberals, religious communities, secular communities, and people who wish to live ordinary lives without transforming every moment into a political declaration.

Any serious history of ETA must begin by preserving this complexity.

The Basque Country was never simply ETA territory.

ETA never represented the totality of Basque society.

But ETA emerged from a real historical environment in which questions of language, sovereignty, culture, centralization, class, industrialization, repression, and historical memory had accumulated across generations.

To understand the organization, we must first understand the world from which it arose.

II. Euskara and the Meaning of Language

Language is one of the deepest structures of human consciousness.

A language is more than a system for transmitting information.

It contains metaphors.

It preserves inherited categories.

It carries humor that cannot always be translated.

It contains names for landscapes, tools, foods, relationships, rituals, weather, animals, and emotions.

It is the sound through which a child first encounters the social world.

For this reason, language can become intensely political when people believe it is threatened.

Euskara, the Basque language, occupies a distinctive position in Europe. It is not an Indo-European language and has long attracted scholarly and popular fascination because of its linguistic distinctiveness.

But a living language is more than an object of scholarly curiosity.

It exists because people speak it.

A language survives at kitchen tables, in schools, in songs, in jokes, in workplaces, in religious life, in literature, and in conversations between generations.

When a language is pushed from public life, the process of disappearance may occur slowly.

First, another language becomes necessary for administration.

Then for education.

Then for employment.

Then for social advancement.

Parents begin to believe that speaking the dominant language will give their children better opportunities.

The minority language becomes associated with rural life, old age, poverty, backwardness, or private domestic use.

Within several generations, what appeared to be a free linguistic choice may reveal itself as the result of unequal structures.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **structural assimilation**.

Structural assimilation does not always require a soldier standing inside every classroom.

It can operate through incentives, humiliation, economic pressure, institutional exclusion, and the constant message that one language belongs to the future while another belongs only to the past.

This is why linguistic freedom cannot be understood merely as the absence of an explicit prohibition.

A language must possess spaces in which it can live.

Education.

Literature.

Media.

Public administration.

Cultural institutions.

Community life.

Without these, formal freedom may coexist with practical disappearance.

The preservation and revival of Euskara therefore became inseparable from broader questions of Basque identity.

For some, language preservation was cultural work.

For others, it became political resistance.

For revolutionary nationalists, it became part of national liberation.

These positions overlapped but were not identical.

This distinction will become increasingly important as our history develops.

III. The Nation as Memory

What is a nation?

The question has produced countless theories.

Some define nations through common language.

Others through territory.

Others through economic integration.

Others through historical consciousness.

Others through political will.

Others through myths of common ancestry.

In reality, nations are rarely produced by one factor alone.

A nation is not simply biological.

It is not simply administrative.

It is not simply linguistic.

It is not simply economic.

A nation exists through shared structures of memory and belonging, but these structures are always changing.

Moshe Reed Thought defines the nation as a **historically developed community of belonging whose members participate, to different degrees, in shared memory, cultural inheritance, social institutions, territorial attachment, and political imagination**.

This definition deliberately rejects racial mysticism.

Blood does not speak a language.

Genes do not produce political programs.

Biology does not write constitutions.

A person may enter a cultural community through language, participation, relationship, residence, commitment, and shared life.

The nation must therefore remain open enough to live.

A nation obsessed with purity becomes a museum guarded by frightened men.

A living culture changes.

It receives influences.

It adapts.

It translates.

It creates.

It remembers.

It forgets.

It argues with itself.

The challenge is not to freeze culture but to allow communities meaningful power over the conditions under which cultural change occurs.

There is a profound difference between organic cultural transformation and forced assimilation.

The first emerges from human relationships.

The second emerges from unequal power.

Moshe Reed Thought defends the former and opposes the latter.

IV. The Foral Tradition and Local Liberty

The history of Basque political identity cannot be understood solely through modern nationalism.

Long before the creation of ETA, political memory in the Basque territories was shaped by traditions of local rights, customary institutions, and distinct legal arrangements commonly associated with the fueros.

These traditions varied across territories and historical periods. They should not be romanticized as modern democracy existing unchanged in the medieval past.

History does not need mythology.

Yet the political memory of distinctive rights mattered.

Communities remember not only what institutions actually were but what later generations believe those institutions represented.

Local autonomy can become part of political identity.

The memory of lost rights can become a language through which later conflicts are interpreted.

A centralized government may describe administrative uniformity as modernization.

A local community may experience the same process as dispossession.

Both perspectives may refer to the same institutional change while assigning it completely different meanings.

Moshe Reed Thought places great importance upon this conflict between **centralization from above** and **federation from below**.

The centralized state tends to imagine society as a pyramid.

Authority descends.

Law descends.

Administration descends.

Resources are collected and redistributed through central institutions.

Local units become extensions of the national bureaucracy.

The commonwealth model imagines another structure.

Authority begins with living communities.

Municipalities coordinate regionally.

Regions federate.

Workplaces develop participatory institutions.

Cooperatives organize economic activity.

Higher institutions exist to coordinate what lower institutions cannot accomplish independently.

Authority rises through delegation rather than simply descending through command.

This principle does not mean that every historical Basque institution followed the Moshe Reed model.

They did not.

Rather, the historical memory of local rights provides a starting point for examining the deeper political question of where legitimate authority begins.

Does sovereignty belong naturally to the central state?

Or does legitimate political authority emerge from communities that construct larger associations?

Moshe Reed Thought chooses the second principle.

The state must justify itself to the community.

The community does not exist merely because the state permits it.

V. Industrialization and the Transformation of Society

Modern nationalism did not emerge in an untouched traditional world.

The Basque territories underwent profound economic and social transformation.

Industrialization changed cities.

Mining expanded.

Factories developed.

New populations arrived.

Class structures changed.

Old communities encountered new economic relationships.

The modern worker emerged within systems of wage labor increasingly separated from traditional forms of production and local control.

These transformations created new political identities.

Socialism grew.

Trade unionism developed.

Anarchist ideas circulated.

Catholic social movements responded to industrial society.

Nationalism developed in interaction and competition with class politics.

This is important because political identities do not develop in isolation.

A worker may experience exploitation as a worker.

The same person may experience cultural marginalization as a member of a linguistic community.

The same person may participate in religious institutions.

The same person may possess regional loyalties.

The same person may understand the state through military service, taxation, education, policing, or employment.

Human identity is layered.

Political movements often fail when they demand that one layer destroy all others.

Some forms of orthodox class reductionism treated national identity as little more than a distraction from economic struggle.

Some forms of nationalism treated class conflict as a dangerous division within the nation.

Both perspectives were incomplete.

Capitalism can exploit workers across cultural boundaries.

States can also suppress particular cultural communities.

A worker can experience both class domination and cultural domination.

Recognizing one does not require denying the other.

The later development of revolutionary Basque nationalism would emerge partly from attempts to synthesize national liberation and socialism.

That synthesis would produce powerful political energy.

It would also create contradictions that ETA would never fully resolve.

Was the primary struggle between the Basque nation and the Spanish state?

Was it between workers and capitalists?

Could Basque capitalists belong to a national liberation movement?

Could Spanish-speaking workers living in the Basque Country belong to the revolutionary national community?

Was independence a stage toward socialism?

Was socialism the content of independence?

Would a liberated Basque state reproduce capitalist class relations?

Could national liberation occur without social revolution?

These were not abstract academic questions.

They affected strategy, organization, alliances, and definitions of belonging.

The tension between class and nation would become one of the great ideological problems of ETA's history.

VI. The Danger of Purity

Whenever cultural survival becomes politically urgent, the temptation of purity appears.

The threatened community begins to ask:

Who truly belongs?

Who is authentic?

Who has preserved the language?

Who has betrayed it?

Who arrived recently?

Who can be trusted?

Who represents the nation?

These questions can emerge from genuine historical fear.

But fear can create destructive politics.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects ethnonational purity because purity is incompatible with living human communities.

People migrate.

Families intermarry.

Languages change.

Cities expand.

Workers move where employment exists.

Borders shift.

Identities overlap.

Any political program incapable of accepting this reality will eventually require coercion to preserve an imagined social purity that never truly existed.

A liberated community must therefore define belonging politically and culturally rather than biologically.

The person who learns the language belongs.

The person who works beside the community belongs.

The person who raises a family within the community belongs.

The person who contributes to the common good belongs.

The person who respects the freedom and dignity of neighbors belongs.

A commonwealth must be capable of receiving people without demanding cultural annihilation from either the newcomer or the older community.

Integration is reciprocal.

The newcomer enters an existing social world.

The existing community is also changed by the newcomer.

Neither process should be understood through conquest.

The political challenge is to create institutions strong enough to preserve cultural inheritance without transforming inheritance into exclusion.

This is one of the most difficult problems in nationalist politics.

It is also one of the problems against which revolutionary nationalism must be judged.

VII. Homeland and Capital

Capitalism possesses an unusual relationship with place.

Capital moves.

Factories close.

Investment relocates.

Housing becomes a commodity.

Land becomes an asset.

Workers migrate toward employment.

Communities dependent upon single industries rise and collapse according to decisions made elsewhere.

The market recognizes price more easily than belonging.

A mountain may become mineral reserves.

A coastline may become development property.

A village may become an investment opportunity.

A home may become a speculative instrument.

A worker may become a labor cost.

Moshe Reed Thought opposes this reduction of the world to exchange value.

A homeland is not merchandise.

This principle connects cultural survival with political economy.

If people cannot afford to live in their own communities, cultural autonomy becomes symbolic.

If workers possess no meaningful control over economic life, political independence alone may simply create a new flag above the same relationships of domination.

If local economies depend entirely upon distant capital, formal sovereignty may coexist with practical dependence.

Therefore, the national question cannot be separated completely from the social question.

What does independence mean to the worker?

What does autonomy mean to the tenant?

What does sovereignty mean to the person whose workplace can be closed by decisions made thousands of kilometers away?

What does cultural revival mean if young people must leave their communities because they cannot build lives there?

Moshe Reed Thought answers that liberation must possess material content.

Housing.

Work.

Education.

Healthcare.

Language.

Community.

Participation.

Time.

Security.

Meaningful control over the institutions shaping everyday life.

A flag without social transformation may provide dignity, but dignity alone cannot pay rent.

Socialism without cultural freedom may provide material institutions while suffocating human diversity.

The commonwealth must hold both truths together.

VIII. Against the Myth of the Eternal Enemy

National movements frequently construct themselves through opposition.

We are ourselves because we are not them.

This is understandable.

Identity often develops through distinction.

But distinction can become hostility.

Hostility can become mythology.

Mythology can become permanent enemy construction.

The neighboring people becomes an abstraction.

The abstraction becomes a threat.

The threat becomes an enemy.

The enemy becomes less than human.

At this point, political violence becomes psychologically easier.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the concept of the eternal national enemy.

Governments can oppress.

Institutions can dominate.

Armies can invade.

Police forces can abuse power.

Political systems can suppress cultures.

These realities must be named.

But a population cannot be reduced to the actions of a state.

The Spanish worker is not identical to the Spanish government.

The French worker is not identical to the French government.

The Basque worker is not identical to a Basque political organization.

A revolutionary politics that cannot distinguish institutions from populations will eventually become collective hatred.

The liberation of one people must not require the humiliation of another.

This principle is not sentimental.

It is structurally necessary.

Human communities live beside one another.

They trade.

They migrate.

They form families.

They share infrastructure.

They share ecological systems.

They inherit overlapping histories.

A political program based upon permanent hostility eventually imprisons the society it claims to liberate.

The future of Euskal Herria, whatever political forms its people democratically choose, cannot be built upon eternal hatred.

No commonwealth can survive by teaching every generation that its identity requires an enemy.

IX. The Right to Self-Determination

Moshe Reed Thought recognizes the principle of self-determination.

But self-determination must be understood carefully.

It is not the right of an armed minority to decide the political future of an entire population.

It is not the right of a central state to prohibit every discussion of sovereignty.

It is not the right of a nationalist party to declare itself identical with the nation.

Self-determination means that communities must possess peaceful, democratic, participatory mechanisms through which questions of political association can be debated and decided.

Autonomy.

Federation.

Confederation.

Independence.

Shared sovereignty.

Municipal decentralization.

These possibilities should be subjects of political struggle rather than military destiny.

The principle is simple:

If a political union can survive only by permanently denying discussion about the terms of that union, then the union possesses a legitimacy problem.

But the reverse is also true:

If a separatist movement can advance only by intimidating those who disagree, then its claim to liberation contains a contradiction.

Freedom must include the freedom to disagree with the national movement.

Otherwise, independence becomes merely another form of obedience.

X. Before ETA

Before ETA, the essential elements of the later conflict already existed in different forms.

There was a distinctive cultural identity.

There was a language whose survival became a political concern.

There was historical memory of local rights.

There was industrial transformation.

There was class conflict.

There was nationalism.

There was socialism.

There was religious influence.

There were competing ideas of Spain.

There were competing ideas of the Basque Country.

There were disagreements over autonomy and independence.

There were arguments over tradition and modernity.

Then came war.

Then dictatorship.

Then repression.

Then a generation grew up believing that older political organizations had failed.

It was from this historical soil that ETA would emerge.

The organization did not invent the Basque question.

It entered it.

It interpreted it.

It radicalized one response to it.

It attempted to give the historical question an armed revolutionary answer.

That answer would transform the organization.

It would transform the state response.

It would transform Basque politics.

And it would leave behind a history of suffering that cannot be understood through slogans.

The mountains existed before the gun.

The language existed before the manifesto.

The people existed before the organization.

And when the organization finally disappeared, the people remained.

This is the first principle necessary for understanding everything that follows.

A movement is not a people.

A party is not a class.

A state is not a society.

An army is not a nation.

An organization is not history.

Human beings create institutions, and institutions must always remain answerable to human life.

The tragedy begins when this relationship is reversed.

The next stage of the story is the formation of the modern political conflict itself: the struggle between Basque identity, emerging nationalism, industrial capitalism, and the increasingly centralized imagination of the modern state.

That conflict would prepare the ground upon which a later generation would conclude that cultural resistance was no longer enough.

Chapter 2

The Basque Question and the Modern State

The modern state desires clarity.

It desires borders that can be drawn.

Populations that can be counted.

Languages that can be standardized.

Taxes that can be collected.

Laws that can be administered uniformly.

Children who can be educated according to a national curriculum.

Soldiers who can be mobilized under a common flag.

Citizens whose political identity corresponds neatly with the territory governed from the center.

Human history, however, rarely possesses such clarity.

People live within overlapping worlds.

A person may belong simultaneously to a village, a province, a linguistic community, a religious tradition, an economic class, a nation, and a wider civilization. These identities do not always contradict one another. They become politically explosive when institutions insist that only one identity may possess public legitimacy.

The Basque question emerged from this tension.

It was not a single question, and it did not possess a single answer.

Was the Basque Country a cultural region within Spain?

Was it a historical nation?

Was it a collection of territories possessing distinct traditional rights?

Should it possess administrative autonomy?

Political sovereignty?

Independence?

Could Basque identity coexist with Spanish identity?

Was nationalism a defense against centralization or a modern political construction of its own?

Was the primary conflict national or economic?

Did liberation mean the restoration of historical rights, the creation of an independent state, a socialist revolution, or some combination of these objectives?

Different generations answered differently.

Different classes answered differently.

Different political movements answered differently.

The tragedy of later armed conflict cannot be understood without recognizing that the Basque question always contained this plurality.

No organization ever possessed the only possible answer.

I. The Architecture of the Modern State

The modern centralized state is not simply a government.

It is an architecture of administration.

It attempts to make society visible from above.

The state counts the population.

It maps territory.

It defines legal categories.

It creates administrative divisions.

It standardizes measurements.

It regulates education.

It determines official languages.

It creates systems of identification.

It establishes courts, police forces, prisons, armies, and bureaucracies.

Many of these institutions can perform necessary social functions.

Moshe Reed Thought does not imagine that complex societies can exist without coordination.

The question is not whether administration exists.

The question is where authority begins, how power is distributed, and whether communities participate meaningfully in the institutions governing them.

A centralized state says:

The center possesses sovereignty and delegates limited authority downward.

The commonwealth says:

Communities possess political life and delegate necessary authority upward.

The distinction is fundamental.

Under the first model, autonomy is permission.

Under the second, federation is agreement.

Under the first, the local community is an administrative unit.

Under the second, the local community is a political subject.

Modern European state formation frequently followed the logic of centralization. Governments attempted to create unified systems from territories containing diverse legal traditions, languages, customs, and historical identities.

Centralization could be defended as rationalization.

One law.

One administration.

One educational system.

One national market.

One military structure.

One national identity.

But rationalization from the perspective of the center may be experienced as dispossession from the perspective of the periphery.

The central government sees efficiency.

The local community sees the disappearance of its institutions.

The state sees national integration.

The minority language community sees assimilation.

The administrator sees uniformity.

The village sees distance.

Neither perspective can simply be assumed away.

The political problem begins when one side possesses enough power to make its perspective compulsory.

II. The Loss of Local Worlds

Every process of centralization has an emotional history as well as an institutional history.

A legal historian may describe changes in jurisdiction.

An economist may describe market integration.

A political scientist may describe state consolidation.

But ordinary people experience history differently.

They experience a school changing its language of instruction.

They experience officials arriving from elsewhere.

They experience children learning that the speech of their grandparents is unsuitable for advancement.

They experience local institutions losing authority.

They experience young people leaving villages for industrial centers.

They experience customs becoming folklore.

They experience political decisions moving farther away.

The transformation may occur over decades.

No single moment contains the whole process.

Yet collective memory gathers fragments into a story.

We had something.

It was taken.

We were once more free.

We became subordinate.

Whether every element of this memory corresponds precisely to historical reality is not the only political question.

Memory itself becomes a force.

Movements organize around remembered loss.

The memory of autonomy can become more politically powerful after autonomy disappears.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this the **politics of dispossessed memory**.

Dispossessed memory does not necessarily seek literal restoration of the past.

Often, the past becomes symbolic material for constructing a future.

A movement may invoke ancestral institutions while proposing a modern republic.

It may invoke traditional rights while demanding socialism.

It may invoke ancient identity through modern mass politics.

This is not necessarily hypocrisy.

Human beings construct futures from inherited languages.

But danger appears when memory becomes mythology.

The past may be purified.

Internal conflicts disappear.

Class divisions disappear.

Women disappear from the historical narrative.

Minorities disappear.

Political disagreement disappears.

The imagined ancestors become perfectly united.

The nation becomes eternal.

The enemy becomes eternal.

History becomes a sacred drama.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that historical memory must be preserved without being worshipped.

A mature people can love its history while admitting that the past was contradictory.

III. Industrial Capitalism and the New Basque Society

The rise of industrial capitalism transformed the social basis of Basque politics.

Industry reorganized space.

Rural populations moved.

Cities expanded.

Mines and factories drew workers.

New wealth accumulated.

A modern bourgeoisie developed.

A modern industrial working class grew.

Migration altered the cultural composition of industrial areas.

These changes complicated nationalism.

The nationalist imagination often begins with an image of organic unity: a people connected by language, culture, land, and memory.

Industrial capitalism disrupts this image.

The capitalist does not necessarily share the economic interests of the worker simply because both belong to the same cultural community.

The migrant worker may share class interests with local workers while possessing a different linguistic or regional background.

A nationalist movement must decide which contradiction it considers primary.

Nation against state?

Worker against capitalist?

Culture against assimilation?

Community against market?

Religion against secularization?

Tradition against modernity?

Different movements offered different answers.

Socialists emphasized class struggle.

Nationalists emphasized national survival.

Anarchists attacked both capitalist exploitation and centralized authority.

Conservative currents defended social order and tradition.

Religious institutions responded in different ways to modernity and political change.

The future revolutionary synthesis of national liberation and socialism emerged from this crowded ideological landscape.

Moshe Reed Thought recognizes that neither pure nationalism nor pure economic reductionism adequately explains such a society.

A worker does not stop speaking a language when entering a factory.

A language does not eliminate the wage relation.

Culture does not abolish class.

Class does not abolish culture.

The challenge is to understand how forms of domination overlap without pretending they are identical.

Capitalism can exploit people regardless of nationality.

A centralized state can suppress particular national cultures.

A local capitalist can exploit workers of the same nation.

A worker from the dominant national community can also experience severe economic exploitation.

Reality does not arrange itself according to ideological convenience.

IV. The Worker and the Nation

The relationship between socialism and nationalism has always been difficult.

Universalist socialism speaks the language of international solidarity.

National liberation speaks the language of a particular people.

The socialist says:

Workers share interests across borders.

The nationalist says:

A people cannot be free while governed by another political center.

Both claims can contain truth.

Both can also become distorted.

Internationalism can become an excuse for ignoring cultural domination.

Nationalism can become an excuse for ignoring class domination.

A worker may be told to forget cultural suppression because class struggle is supposedly more important.

The same worker may be told to accept exploitation by a local capitalist because national unity is supposedly more important.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects both demands.

The worker is neither an economic machine nor a national symbol.

The worker is a whole human being.

Economic liberation matters.

Cultural dignity matters.

Political participation matters.

Community matters.

Language matters.

Time matters.

Family matters.

Meaning matters.

The political task is not to reduce the human being to one category.

It is to construct institutions capable of protecting the many dimensions of human dignity.

This principle would later provide one of the standards by which revolutionary nationalism must be judged.

A movement may speak in the name of workers while creating fear among workers.

A movement may speak in the name of a nation while silencing members of that nation.

A state may speak in the name of democracy while abusing prisoners.

A government may speak in the name of security while violating law.

Political language does not determine political reality.

Institutions must be judged by their effects upon actual human beings.

V. The Creation of National Consciousness

Nations do not awaken in a single moment.

National consciousness develops unevenly.

One region becomes politically mobilized before another.

Urban intellectuals may formulate doctrines that rural communities understand differently.

Language activists may define the nation culturally.

Political organizers may define it territorially.

Workers may interpret national identity through economic struggle.

Religious communities may understand the nation through sacred history.

Exiles may imagine the homeland differently from those who remain.

Nationalism is therefore not one thing.

It is a field of competing interpretations.

This is especially important when discussing the later development of militant organizations.

The armed organization frequently attempts to resolve plurality through ideological certainty.

It says:

The nation has one historical interest.

We understand that interest.

Our program expresses it.

Opposition to our program therefore becomes opposition to the nation.

This is the beginning of political substitution.

Moshe Reed Thought opposes substitution because no organization can become the consciousness of an entire people.

The nation must be allowed to disagree with itself.

A people unable to disagree is not united.

It is silenced.

The strength of a political community should be measured partly by the amount of disagreement it can survive without violence.

This does not mean neutrality toward injustice.

A society must defend people from exploitation, discrimination, and coercion.

But the defense of justice must not become a justification for permanent organizational monopoly.

The people must remain politically alive.

VI. Two Nationalisms Facing One Another

The Basque question cannot be understood by examining Basque nationalism alone.

Nationalism at the center often disguises itself as normality.

The minority possesses nationalism.

The majority supposedly possesses only citizenship.

The regional language is political.

The dominant language is supposedly neutral.

The minority flag is nationalist.

The state flag is supposedly administrative.

This asymmetry hides the fact that centralized states also produce national narratives.

They teach history.

They define symbols.

They create holidays.

They honor military events.

They standardize language.

They construct ideas of territorial unity.

They define acceptable and unacceptable political claims.

The conflict is therefore often not between nationalism and neutrality.

It is between competing national imaginations with unequal institutional power.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that dominant nationalism must be made visible.

A centralized state may genuinely believe that territorial unity is necessary for peace and solidarity.

But belief does not eliminate power.

When the state declares its own borders permanently unquestionable while describing every alternative political imagination as extremist, it transforms a historical arrangement into a sacred object.

The state becomes an idol.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects state idolatry.

Political boundaries are human constructions.

They may be useful.

They may become deeply meaningful.

They may create stable institutions.

But they are not metaphysical truths.

The legitimacy of political arrangements depends upon the lives they make possible and the participation of the people governed by them.

At the same time, minority nationalism can create its own idols.

The map of the desired homeland may become sacred.

The revolutionary organization may become sacred.

The armed struggle may become sacred.

The martyr may become politically untouchable.

The movement may begin to interpret compromise as betrayal.

Thus, two sacred nationalisms may confront one another.

Each sees only the other's mythology.

Neither sees its own.

VII. The Political Economy of Centralization

Centralization is not only cultural.

It is economic.

Who controls taxation?

Who decides infrastructure priorities?

Who owns industry?

Who controls land?

Where are investments directed?

Who decides labor policy?

Which institutions control credit?

Who benefits from development?

Political sovereignty and economic sovereignty are connected, though they are not identical.

A region may possess cultural autonomy while remaining economically dependent.

A formally independent state may remain subordinate to international capital.

A centralized socialist state may nationalize industry while denying meaningful worker control.

A decentralized capitalist region may possess political institutions while workers remain subordinate within the workplace.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore distinguishes between several forms of sovereignty:

territorial sovereignty, concerning jurisdiction over land;

political sovereignty, concerning participation in government;

economic sovereignty, concerning control over productive life;

cultural sovereignty, concerning the reproduction of language and cultural institutions;

and **personal sovereignty**, concerning the dignity and freedom of the human person.

A society may possess one while lacking another.

This distinction prevents simplistic politics.

Independence does not automatically create socialism.

Socialism does not automatically create cultural freedom.

Democracy does not automatically create workplace power.

Autonomy does not automatically create economic justice.

Revolution does not automatically create liberation.

Every dimension must be examined.

VIII. Migration and the Question of Belonging

Industrial development brought migration.

Migration created another difficult question:

Who belongs to the nation?

The dangerous answer is biological.

The insufficient answer is purely administrative.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes civic-cultural belonging.

A person belongs through participation in shared life.

This participation can include learning language, working within the community, raising families, building relationships, accepting mutual obligations, respecting local cultural inheritance, and contributing to the commonwealth.

Belonging should be possible.

This is essential.

A nation that makes belonging impossible for newcomers creates permanent internal populations of outsiders.

A state that demands the abandonment of minority culture creates assimilation.

A commonwealth must avoid both.

The newcomer should not be treated as an invader merely for arriving.

The established community should not be told that preserving its language is xenophobic merely because newcomers speak another language.

The solution is neither exclusion nor cultural surrender.

It is integration through mutual participation.

Language education should be available.

Economic institutions should prevent workers from being divided according to origin.

Housing should not become a weapon of segregation.

Public institutions should recognize the cultural reality of the region.

The working class should not be divided into native and migrant categories for the benefit of employers or political opportunists.

This is difficult work.

Slogans are easier.

History repeatedly shows the consequences of choosing slogans.

IX. Democracy as More Than Voting

The modern state often defines democracy primarily through elections.

Elections matter.

They provide mechanisms for changing governments without civil war.

They allow political competition.

They create public accountability.

But Moshe Reed Thought considers electoral democracy necessary and insufficient.

A person may vote every several years while possessing almost no control over the workplace.

A municipality may elect officials while lacking meaningful fiscal authority.

A cultural community may vote while its language continues to disappear structurally.

A region may possess a parliament while economic decisions remain concentrated in private institutions beyond democratic control.

Democracy must therefore be deepened.

The workplace must become democratic.

The municipality must become meaningful.

Cooperatives must be encouraged.

Regional government must possess real responsibility.

Citizens must have access to institutions beyond periodic voting.

Political education must create participants rather than spectators.

This vision matters to the Basque question because autonomy cannot be measured only through symbols.

The question is what people can actually decide.

Who controls the school?

Who controls the workplace?

Who controls housing?

Who controls local development?

Who controls language policy?

Who controls policing?

Who controls taxation?

Who controls natural resources?

A political structure is democratic to the degree that those affected by decisions possess meaningful power over those decisions.

X. The Coming Catastrophe

The tensions of modern Spain did not remain theoretical.

Political polarization deepened.

Class conflict intensified.

Regional nationalisms challenged centralized visions of the state.

Republicanism, socialism, anarchism, conservatism, monarchism, fascism, and competing religious and secular forces confronted one another.

The social order entered crisis.

Then came civil war.

Civil war is the collapse of the political distinction between neighbor and enemy.

The person living across the street acquires a category.

The category becomes destiny.

The political opponent becomes an existential threat.

Institutions disintegrate.

Fear accelerates.

Rumor becomes evidence.

Retaliation becomes justice.

Every atrocity becomes justification for the next.

The Spanish Civil War would leave wounds across generations.

For the Basque Country, it would also become inseparable from memories of destruction, defeat, repression, and the authoritarian order that followed.

The dictatorship of Francisco Franco would attempt to impose a centralized national vision upon a society already wounded by war.

For a later generation of Basque youth, this would become the world into which they were born.

They would not remember the old political debates as debates.

They would inherit them as consequences.

They would inherit silence.

They would inherit prison stories.

They would inherit cultural restrictions.

They would inherit memories of war from parents and grandparents.

Some would choose cultural work.

Some would choose religious engagement.

Some would choose conventional nationalism.

Some would choose socialism.

Some would eventually choose clandestine organization.

History had not predetermined ETA.

There was no mechanical law requiring its creation.

Human beings always possess alternatives, even when those alternatives are constrained.

But the conditions from which ETA emerged were becoming visible.

A people possessed a strong cultural identity.

The modern state pursued centralization.

Industrial capitalism transformed social relationships.

Nationalism and socialism competed and interacted.

War destroyed the political order.

Dictatorship closed democratic space.

A generation began searching for new methods.

The mountains were still there.

The language was still spoken.

The memories remained.

But the political world was about to become darker.

Chapter 3

War, Defeat, and Dictatorship

Civil war destroys the comforting illusion that political conflict exists only in parliaments, newspapers, speeches, and elections.

In civil war, the abstract becomes immediate.

The argument becomes a checkpoint.

The slogan becomes a uniform.

The political category becomes a prison sentence.

The disagreement between competing visions of society enters the street, the workplace, the village, and the family.

Spain entered such a catastrophe in 1936.

The conflict that followed was not a simple struggle between two perfectly unified camps. Republican forces contained liberals, socialists, communists, anarchists, regional nationalists, trade unionists, and others whose visions of the future often differed profoundly. The forces supporting the

military uprising likewise contained different conservative, monarchist, authoritarian, fascist, traditionalist, and Catholic currents.

The Basque territories themselves were politically divided.

This complexity matters.

History becomes propaganda when entire populations are painted with a single color.

Yet from the destruction of the war emerged a political reality that would profoundly shape the later history of Basque nationalism: the dictatorship of Francisco Franco and its centralized conception of Spain.

For the generation that later created Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, the dictatorship was not merely a chapter in a history book.

It was the political atmosphere of youth.

To understand the birth of ETA, one must first understand the world in which democratic national politics appeared blocked, cultural identity became politically charged, and opposition to the state could carry severe consequences.

Moshe Reed Thought begins with a principle:

Repression does not mechanically create revolution, but it can destroy the institutions through which conflict might otherwise remain peaceful.

This chapter examines the destruction of those institutions and the consequences that followed.

I. The Collapse of Political Life

A functioning political society depends upon disagreement being survivable.

Political opponents must be capable of losing an election without believing that physical extermination will follow.

Workers must be capable of organizing without every strike becoming a battle for the existence of the state.

Religious communities must be capable of practicing their faith without seeking political monopoly.

Secular citizens must be capable of participating in public life without being treated as enemies of civilization.

Regional communities must be capable of discussing autonomy without automatically being accused of treason.

Governments must be capable of transferring power.

When these conditions disappear, politics becomes existential.

Every victory appears permanent.

Every defeat appears fatal.

Every compromise appears as surrender.

Every opponent appears as an enemy.

Spain's crisis developed through accumulated conflicts that cannot be reduced to one cause.

Class inequality.

Land ownership.

Military power.

Religious conflict.

Regional nationalism.

Labor militancy.

Political polarization.

Fear of revolution.

Fear of counterrevolution.

Weak institutions.

Cycles of confrontation.

Competing visions of the state.

These tensions entered a catastrophic phase with the military uprising of July 1936 and the civil war that followed.

For Moshe Reed Thought, the lesson is not that disagreement itself causes civil war.

The lesson is that societies become fragile when institutions cannot transform disagreement into legitimate participation.

Suppress the worker long enough and economic struggle becomes revolutionary.

Suppress the region long enough and autonomy becomes separation.

Suppress the opposition long enough and legal politics becomes clandestine politics.

Suppress speech long enough and rumor becomes political education.

A society that destroys peaceful channels should not be surprised when conflict reappears in other forms.

But this principle must be stated carefully.

The existence of repression does not make every response to repression morally legitimate.

Cause is not permission.

This distinction will remain central throughout the history that follows.

II. The Basque Country in the Civil War

The Basque political world entered the war with its own internal complexities.

Basque nationalism was not identical to Spanish republicanism.

Basque Catholicism was not identical to every form of Spanish conservatism.

Class politics crossed national politics.

Territorial differences mattered.

The Basque Country cannot be represented as a single political actor moving unanimously through history.

Yet the war created alliances shaped by immediate circumstances.

The defense of autonomy, opposition to the military rebellion, religious identity, class politics, and local conditions interacted in different ways.

The war also intensified the relationship between Basque political identity and collective memory.

War creates compressed history.

Events occurring over months become symbols lasting generations.

A destroyed town becomes more than a town.

A prison becomes more than a building.

A retreat becomes more than a military movement.

A defeat becomes a story told by grandparents.

Children inherit emotional maps of events they never personally experienced.

This inherited memory would later become politically important.

The generation that founded ETA did not need to have personally fought in the civil war to live within its consequences.

History can be inherited socially.

The child hears what adults say.

The child also notices what adults refuse to say.

Silence is a form of transmission.

Fear is transmitted.

Humiliation is transmitted.

Memory is transmitted.

So is mythology.

The historian must distinguish between them without pretending that only documented facts influence political consciousness.

People act according to remembered history as well as recorded history.

III. Guernica and the Transformation of Place into Symbol

Some places become larger than geography.

Guernica became such a place.

The bombing of the town during the Spanish Civil War entered international consciousness and became one of the defining symbols associated with the destruction of civilians in modern warfare.

The event was transformed further through art, political memory, and historical debate.

A place became a symbol.

A symbol became part of international political language.

For Basque memory, Guernica possessed additional meaning because of its relationship to historical identity and political tradition.

Moshe Reed Thought treats such symbols carefully.

Symbols preserve memory.

They can also simplify history.

A symbol gathers enormous emotional meaning into one image or name. This makes communication powerful, but it also creates the danger that complexity disappears.

The dead become an argument.

The ruins become a political weapon.

Later generations speak through the suffering of people they never met.

This does not mean that symbols should be abandoned.

Human beings require symbolic memory.

The question is whether the symbol leads toward understanding or toward permanent mobilization.

Memory can say:

This happened. Understand the conditions. Prevent its repetition.

Or memory can say:

This happened. Therefore hatred must be inherited.

The first is historical consciousness.

The second is political imprisonment.

The distinction is difficult, but essential.

A people has the right to remember.

No organization has the right to own that memory.

IV. Victory and the Authoritarian State

The victory of Franco's forces established an authoritarian regime that would endure for decades.

The new order pursued political repression against opponents and imposed a centralized conception of Spanish national identity.

The dictatorship did not merely defeat armed enemies.

It sought to reorganize political life.

Opposition parties and organizations were suppressed.

Political dissent was constrained.

Exile became part of the experience of defeated political communities.

Prisons and state coercion became part of the postwar landscape.

Regional identities existed within a political order that privileged centralized national unity.

Under such conditions, culture itself could acquire oppositional meaning.

A language lesson could become political.

A song could become political.

A book could become political.

A gathering could become political.

This is one of the paradoxes of authoritarian centralization.

The state seeks depoliticization.

It wants people to withdraw from forbidden political activity.

But when ordinary cultural practices are restricted, the state politicizes the very activities it seeks to neutralize.

Language becomes resistance because authority has made language a question of power.

Identity becomes militant because authority has made identity suspect.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this the **radicalization of ordinary life**.

The state does not always defeat opposition by repression.

Sometimes it teaches opposition to understand itself through the experience of repression.

This does not mean that repression inevitably produces a particular ideology.

Different people respond differently.

Some withdraw.

Some adapt.

Some collaborate.

Some emigrate.

Some preserve culture quietly.

Some enter religious or charitable life.

Some join legal opposition when possible.

Some become socialists.

Some become nationalists.

Some become revolutionaries.

Some become militants.

History contains choice even under constraint.

But the field in which choices are made is shaped by power.

V. The Centralized Imagination

Authoritarian nationalism frequently imagines diversity as weakness.

One state.

One national story.

One political authority.

One legitimate public identity.

Difference becomes suspicious because difference suggests alternative loyalty.

Alternative loyalty suggests disunity.

Disunity suggests weakness.

Weakness suggests national collapse.

Thus cultural pluralism becomes interpreted as an existential threat.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this logic.

A political community is not strengthened by making every citizen identical.

A forest is not strengthened by replacing every tree with a concrete pillar.

Unity must be capable of containing difference.

The commonwealth is not uniformity.

It is organized plurality.

A centralized authoritarian state fears plurality because it cannot fully control it.

A democratic commonwealth understands plurality as a permanent condition of human life.

The question is not how to eliminate differences.

The question is how to build institutions through which differences coexist, negotiate, cooperate, and sometimes peacefully separate.

The dictatorship's centralized national imagination intensified the Basque political problem because it treated a question of identity and political structure as a problem of obedience.

Obedience can produce silence.

But silence is not consent.

This distinction is repeatedly forgotten by powerful institutions.

A population may appear calm because speaking is dangerous.

An organization may appear unified because dissent is punished.

A workplace may appear harmonious because workers fear dismissal.

A family may appear peaceful because one member dominates everyone else.

The absence of visible conflict does not prove the presence of justice.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore distinguishes between **negative order** and **positive peace**.

Negative order is the absence of visible resistance.

Positive peace is the presence of institutions through which people possess dignity, participation, security, and meaningful control over their lives.

Dictatorship can produce negative order.

It cannot produce positive peace through coercion alone.

VI. Fear as a Political Institution

Fear is not merely an emotion.

Under authoritarian conditions, fear becomes an institution.

People learn what cannot be said.

They learn which books should not be displayed.

They learn which stories should remain inside the family.

They learn when to lower their voices.

They learn that a neighbor may be an informer.

They learn that political identity can affect employment, education, mobility, or safety.

Eventually, censorship becomes internal.

The state no longer needs to stand in every room.

People carry the censor within themselves.

This is one of the deepest forms of domination.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes between external authority and internalized authority.

External authority commands:

Do not speak.

Internalized authority whispers:

It is dangerous even to think of speaking.

The second can survive the first.

Dictatorships leave psychological institutions behind them.

Even after laws change, fear may remain.

Families continue old habits of silence.

People remain suspicious.

Political identities formed underground may struggle to adapt to public politics.

Organizations created under conditions of clandestinity may preserve secrecy after the original conditions change.

This becomes important in understanding the later persistence of armed organizations.

Clandestinity creates a particular consciousness.

The world is divided between trusted and untrusted people.

Information becomes power.

Secrecy becomes survival.

Compromise becomes suspicious.

Police infiltration becomes a permanent fear.

Discipline becomes essential.

The organization becomes family.

The cause becomes identity.

These habits may be understandable under dictatorship.

But habits formed under dictatorship can become dangerous when transferred unchanged into a different political environment.

VII. The Generation After Defeat

The founders of new movements are often children of earlier defeats.

They inherit the conclusion that the previous generation failed.

The old leaders compromised.

The old organizations were too cautious.

The old methods were ineffective.

The old language no longer speaks to the new conditions.

Youth then searches for new forms.

This generational rebellion is a recurring feature of revolutionary history.

The young activist looks at established organizations and sees hesitation.

The older activist looks at youth and sees recklessness.

The young demand action.

The old remember consequences.

Sometimes the young are correct that established institutions have become stagnant.

Sometimes the old are correct that enthusiasm is not strategy.

Often both truths exist simultaneously.

The generation that would create ETA developed within a world shaped by dictatorship and dissatisfaction with older nationalist approaches.

To them, cultural survival alone could appear insufficient.

Waiting could appear like surrender.

Moderation could appear like accommodation.

The heroic language of anti-colonial liberation struggles elsewhere in the world offered another vocabulary.

The twentieth century was filled with movements claiming that disciplined revolutionary organization could transform history.

National liberation struggles challenged empires.

Socialist revolutions claimed to overthrow old classes.

Guerrilla movements presented armed struggle as a path by which apparently weak peoples could defeat stronger states.

For politically frustrated youth, these examples possessed enormous imaginative power.

The world appeared to demonstrate that history belonged to those willing to act.

But examples travel more easily than contexts.

A strategy successful in one country may fail in another.

A theory developed for colonial warfare may be transferred into a different social structure.

The romance of the guerrilla can hide the conditions that made particular struggles possible.

Revolutionary imagination often travels internationally.

Consequences remain local.

VIII. Anti-Fascism and Its Moral Authority

Opposition to fascism and dictatorship carries powerful moral force.

This force can be deserved.

Resistance to authoritarianism may require courage.

People risk imprisonment, exile, torture, and death.

The danger appears when the moral authority gained through resistance becomes permanent immunity from criticism.

A movement says:

We resisted dictatorship.

Therefore our later actions cannot be questioned.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects inherited moral immunity.

Past courage does not sanctify future conduct.

A person who acted heroically yesterday can act unjustly tomorrow.

An organization that resisted oppression can later become oppressive.

A state born from liberation can become authoritarian.

A revolutionary party can become a bureaucracy.

A victim can become a perpetrator.

Human beings are not fixed moral categories.

This principle is essential to any serious examination of ETA.

Opposition to Francoism cannot automatically justify every later action performed under the banner of Basque liberation.

At the same time, later crimes cannot be used retroactively to erase the reality of dictatorship and repression.

Both truths must remain visible.

History is difficult because reality refuses moral convenience.

IX. Repression and the Logic of Escalation

A cycle of political violence often develops through reciprocal justification.

The state says:

Militancy requires greater repression.

The militant says:

Greater repression proves the necessity of militancy.

The state responds:

The continued militancy proves our previous measures were insufficient.

The militant responds:

The expanded repression proves the state understands only force.

Each side uses the other as evidence.

The cycle becomes self-confirming.

This is the **dialectic of escalation**.

It does not mean that both sides possess equal power or equal responsibility in every situation.

States possess prisons, courts, police forces, armies, intelligence institutions, and legal authority.

Underground organizations possess different forms of power.

But moral analysis cannot end with a simple arithmetic of institutional strength.

The relevant questions remain:

Who was harmed?

What action was taken?

Was it necessary?

Was it proportionate?

Were alternatives available?

Who made the decision?

Who was accountable?

What consequences followed?

Moshe Reed Thought refuses to replace these questions with tribal loyalty.

A crime does not become justice because the opposing side committed another crime.

Retaliation does not reverse suffering.

It multiplies it.

X. The Closing of Political Space

Authoritarian systems create a dangerous illusion among opposition movements.

When legal politics is impossible, armed struggle may appear to be the only serious form of action.

This conclusion can become deeply rooted.

The militant learns:

Elections are meaningless.

Courts are instruments of the regime.

Legal parties are impossible.

Public organizing invites arrest.

The state understands only force.

Under dictatorship, these conclusions may possess substantial experiential support.

The problem comes later.

What happens when conditions change?

What happens when elections become possible?

What happens when political parties can organize?

What happens when regional institutions develop?

What happens when a new generation no longer experiences the state in exactly the same way?

Can the armed organization change?

Can it accept that the strategy developed under dictatorship may no longer possess the same justification?

Can it surrender its claim to represent history?

This would become one of the central tragedies of ETA.

An organization formed within dictatorship would survive the dictator.

Its weapons would cross from one historical period into another.

Its justifications would evolve.

Its enemies would change.

Its social environment would change.

But armed institutions possess momentum.

Once a clandestine organization exists, it develops internal structures, loyalties, rituals, prisoners, martyrs, rivalries, strategic doctrines, and material needs.

The struggle becomes a social world.

Ending it becomes more difficult than beginning it.

XI. Memory, Trauma, and Political Inheritance

Historical trauma does not transmit itself genetically.

It transmits itself socially.

Through stories.

Silence.

Monuments.

Songs.

Family behavior.

Political organizations.

Education.

Absence.

A missing photograph.

A name that causes the room to become quiet.

A village story repeated every year.

The next generation receives fragments and constructs meaning from them.

This process can preserve truth.

It can also create mythology.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore proposes a discipline of historical inheritance.

Receive memory.

Investigate it.

Honor suffering.

Question mythology.

Refuse inherited hatred.

No generation is morally obligated to continue the enemies of its grandparents.

It is obligated to understand why those enemies existed.

This distinction offers a path out of historical repetition.

A people without memory can be manipulated.

A people imprisoned by memory can also be manipulated.

Freedom requires remembrance without possession by the past.

XII. The Conditions of ETA's Birth

By the middle of the twentieth century, several historical forces had converged.

There was an old and distinctive Basque cultural identity.

There was a language whose preservation had become politically charged.

There was historical memory of local rights and political distinctiveness.

There had been industrial transformation and class conflict.

There had been the growth of modern nationalism.

There had been civil war.

There had been defeat.

There was dictatorship.

There was centralized national policy.

There was political repression.

There was generational frustration.

There was dissatisfaction with older nationalist leadership.

There was the international example of revolutionary and anti-colonial movements.

There was a growing belief among some young activists that culture could not survive through passive preservation alone.

None of these factors individually created ETA.

Together, they formed the historical field in which a new organization became possible.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects deterministic history.

Human beings make choices.

Structures constrain those choices, but they do not eliminate responsibility.

The founders of ETA were neither puppets of historical forces nor beings acting outside history.

They interpreted their world.

They made judgments.

They chose methods.

Those methods produced consequences.

The task of history is to understand the relationship between condition and choice.

If we discuss only conditions, responsibility disappears.

If we discuss only choices, history disappears.

Both must remain.

The dictatorship created a political environment in which clandestine resistance could appear necessary.

But clandestine resistance contained many possible forms.

Cultural work.

Labor organizing.

Underground publishing.

International advocacy.

Political education.

Nonviolent resistance.

Sabotage.

Armed struggle.

Assassination.

These are not morally identical simply because they emerge from opposition to the same regime.

The choice of method matters.

Methods transform movements.

The organization that prints a forbidden newspaper develops one kind of internal culture.

The organization that kills develops another.

Violence changes secrecy.

It changes discipline.

It changes recruitment.

It changes the relationship between the organization and the population.

It changes the state response.

It changes the psychology of participants.

It changes what becomes possible afterward.

This is why the transition from cultural resistance to armed organization must be studied carefully.

The gun is not merely another political instrument.

Once introduced into a movement, it changes the movement itself.

The next chapter begins with a generation that believed older forms of Basque nationalism had become insufficient.

They wanted action.

They wanted renewal.

They wanted liberation.

They wanted a movement capable of breaking through the apparent permanence of dictatorship.

From study circles, youth networks, cultural activism, political frustration, and radicalizing theory, a new organization emerged.

Its name would declare its aspiration:

Basque Homeland and Freedom.

The historical question was what methods would be chosen in pursuit of that freedom—and what those methods would eventually do to the organization, its opponents, its victims, and the society in whose name it claimed to struggle.

Chapter 4

From Cultural Resistance to Revolutionary Organization

Every revolutionary organization begins before its official founding.

Before the name, there are conversations.

Before the manifesto, there is dissatisfaction.

Before the underground structure, there are friendships, study circles, arguments, cultural associations, youth networks, books passed between readers, and questions that established institutions seem unable to answer.

Organizations are announced on particular dates.

Their deeper origins are harder to locate.

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna emerged in 1959 from a generation of young Basque activists dissatisfied with the political limitations of the world they had inherited. They lived under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, but their rebellion was not directed only against the existing state. It was also generational.

They believed older forms of Basque nationalism had become insufficient.

They wanted renewal.

They wanted action.

They wanted cultural revival.

They wanted political independence.

Increasingly, some wanted revolutionary transformation.

This progression did not occur all at once.

ETA did not emerge fully formed with every later doctrine, structure, and method already established. Like many political movements, it changed through internal debate, external repression, ideological influence, organizational division, and strategic experimentation.

The history of its formation is therefore not merely the story of an organization being created.

It is the story of a transformation in political consciousness.

Culture became resistance.

Resistance became organization.

Organization became revolutionary doctrine.

Revolutionary doctrine increasingly moved toward armed struggle.

At every stage, choices were made.

And every choice narrowed some possibilities while opening others.

Through Moshe Reed Thought, the central question of this chapter is:

How does a movement created to defend a living culture become an institution capable of placing its own organizational logic above the lives of the people it claims to defend?

The answer begins not with condemnation, but with development.

I. The Impatience of a New Generation

Political generations are shaped partly by what they inherit and partly by what they reject.

The older generation remembers defeat.

The younger generation experiences stagnation.

The older generation says:

You do not understand what happened.

The younger generation says:

You have allowed what happened to become permanent.

This conflict appears repeatedly in revolutionary history.

Those who have experienced catastrophic defeat often become cautious. They know the strength of the state. They know the cost of repression. They remember prisons, executions, exile, broken organizations, and lost friends.

Those born afterward may interpret caution as surrender.

They inherit consequences without remembering the original terror directly.

They ask why nothing has changed.

They accuse established leaders of passivity.

They search for new methods.

The young activists who eventually formed ETA emerged from such a generational atmosphere.

They were dissatisfied with established nationalist approaches and sought a more activist response to the dictatorship and to what they understood as the threatened condition of Basque identity.

Moshe Reed Thought treats generational revolt as neither automatically progressive nor automatically foolish.

Youth can see possibilities that older institutions no longer recognize.

Youth can also mistake intensity for wisdom.

Age can preserve experience.

Age can also preserve stagnation.

No generation possesses truth by biological right.

The question is whether a movement can combine historical memory with creative action.

Revolutionary organizations often fail at this balance.

They reject the caution of the previous generation so completely that they also reject its knowledge of consequences.

II. Culture as the First Battlefield

Before armed struggle became central, cultural survival occupied an essential place in the emerging movement.

This is important because political violence can distort historical memory backward.

Once an organization becomes known primarily for violence, observers may imagine that violence was its only language from the beginning.

History is usually more complicated.

Language, history, cultural education, and identity were central concerns within the world from which ETA developed.

Under authoritarian centralization, cultural preservation itself could become oppositional.

To teach a language can be political.

To publish can be political.

To preserve forbidden or marginalized symbols can be political.

To study history outside official narratives can be political.

This transformation occurs because authority has entered cultural life.

Moshe Reed Thought recognizes cultural resistance as a legitimate and often necessary form of human self-defense.

A people has the right to preserve its language.

A community has the right to teach its history.

A region has the right to remember itself.

But cultural resistance contains an important question:

Is the goal to make culture live, or to make culture serve an organization?

The distinction is decisive.

A living language belongs to everyone who speaks it.

An organization may attempt to make the language a marker of political loyalty.

A living culture contains conservatives, socialists, believers, atheists, pacifists, revolutionaries, and politically indifferent people.

An organization may attempt to define authentic culture according to ideological commitment.

At that point, preservation becomes policing.

The defender of identity becomes the judge of identity.

Moshe Reed Thought opposes this transformation.

Culture must remain greater than the organization.

III. The Formation of ETA

ETA was founded in 1959.

Its name, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, is commonly rendered as “Basque Homeland and Freedom.”

The name expressed the fundamental relationship at the heart of the movement's identity: homeland and liberation.

The organization emerged from radicalizing youth currents dissatisfied with established nationalist leadership and increasingly committed to a more activist struggle.

But what did freedom mean?

This question would produce decades of ideological debate.

Freedom could mean cultural survival.

It could mean restoration of political rights.

It could mean autonomy.

It could mean complete independence.

It could mean national revolution.

It could mean socialist transformation.

It could mean the creation of a new revolutionary society.

These goals could overlap, but they were not identical.

The history of ETA would be shaped by attempts to unite them.

Moshe Reed Thought sees here a recurring revolutionary problem: **the accumulation of objectives**.

A movement begins with one demand.

Then the demand becomes connected to another.

National liberation requires social liberation.

Social liberation requires revolution.

Revolution requires a revolutionary organization.

The revolutionary organization requires discipline.

Discipline requires secrecy.

Secrecy requires internal trust.

Internal trust requires control.

Control requires punishment of betrayal.

Each step can be explained.

Together they may produce an institution very different from the movement's original cultural purpose.

This is how political structures evolve.

Rarely does an organization announce:

We will gradually become less accountable to the people.

Instead, every concentration of power is justified as necessary for the struggle.

The emergency becomes permanent.

IV. Naming the Homeland

Names matter in nationalist politics.

A name defines a political imagination.

It identifies territory.

It creates historical continuity.

It distinguishes the community from the administrative language of the state.

The concept of the Basque homeland became more than a description of geography.

It represented a political subject.

To declare the existence of a homeland is to imply that the people associated with that homeland possess some claim to determine its future.

But the word homeland contains both emancipatory and dangerous possibilities.

It can mean:

This is the place in which our language and community should be able to live freely.

Or it can become:

Only those who agree with our definition of the homeland truly belong.

The first protects community.

The second creates exclusion.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore distinguishes between **rooted belonging** and **possessive nationalism**.

Rooted belonging says:

I belong here, and I want my community to survive.

Possessive nationalism says:

This place belongs exclusively to those whom I define as authentic.

The first can coexist with pluralism.

The second requires policing identity.

The first creates a home.

The second creates a checkpoint.

Every national movement must decide which meaning of homeland it will cultivate.

V. The Search for Revolutionary Theory

Young movements search for language capable of explaining their frustration.

Theory provides that language.

It tells activists what kind of conflict they are experiencing.

It identifies allies.

It identifies enemies.

It explains why previous strategies failed.

It predicts what actions will produce change.

For ETA, ideological development increasingly brought revolutionary socialism, anti-colonial theory, and concepts of national liberation into interaction with Basque nationalism.

This was part of a wider international political atmosphere.

Across the twentieth century, anti-colonial struggles and revolutionary movements challenged imperial systems and established states.

For young militants living under dictatorship, these struggles could appear to provide a universal model.

A people is oppressed.

A revolutionary vanguard emerges.

The vanguard awakens the population.

Repression exposes the true nature of the state.

The people join the struggle.

The state becomes isolated.

Liberation follows.

This narrative possesses extraordinary emotional power.

It transforms frustration into historical mission.

The activist is no longer merely an isolated young person facing an apparently permanent dictatorship.

The activist becomes part of a global movement of history.

Moshe Reed Thought warns against the intoxicating power of historical mission.

A person who believes history has personally authorized him becomes dangerous.

A party that believes history has selected it becomes more dangerous.

An armed organization that believes history has granted it exclusive legitimacy becomes more dangerous still.

Theory must remain a tool.

When theory becomes destiny, evidence loses power.

If the population does not support the strategy, the organization says the population has not yet developed sufficient consciousness.

If violence produces backlash, the organization says repression proves the strategy correct.

If elections produce unwanted results, the organization says electoral consciousness is false.

If people are afraid, the organization says fear is evidence of state domination.

Every outcome becomes confirmation.

A theory that cannot be disproved becomes theology.

VI. From Nationalism Toward Revolutionary Socialism

ETA's ideological development involved significant debates over the relationship between Basque nationalism and revolutionary socialism.

This was not a minor theoretical issue.

It concerned the identity of the movement itself.

Was the goal simply an independent Basque state?

Or would independence without socialism reproduce exploitation under a new flag?

Was the national bourgeoisie an ally in liberation?

Or was it a class enemy?

Was the working class the primary revolutionary subject?

How should Spanish-speaking workers living in the Basque Country be understood?

Could national liberation unite people across class lines?

Would class struggle divide the national movement?

These questions have confronted national liberation movements around the world.

Moshe Reed Thought approaches them through the principle of the **double liberation**.

A worker should not be required to choose between cultural dignity and economic dignity.

National liberation without social transformation can produce a local ruling class.

Social transformation without cultural freedom can produce centralized bureaucratic domination.

Therefore, genuine liberation must be both social and communal.

But Moshe Reed Thought differs from revolutionary vanguardism in the means by which this transformation should occur.

The commonwealth cannot be imposed upon passive people by an armed minority.

Worker participation must be practiced, not promised.

Municipal democracy must be built, not postponed.

Cooperatives must be organized, not merely described in future programs.

Cultural institutions must live in the present.

The means must contain the social relationships of the desired future.

A secret hierarchical organization cannot easily create an open democratic society.

A movement built upon command cannot simply promise participation later.

Institutions teach behavior.

Methods educate consciousness.

The organization becomes a school for the society it may eventually create.

This is why methods matter.

VII. The Vanguard Problem

Revolutionary movements often distinguish between the politically conscious minority and the broader population.

This distinction contains some truth.

Political consciousness is uneven.

Some people study more.

Some organize more.

Some take greater risks.

Some identify problems before the majority recognizes them.

But from this truth can emerge a dangerous conclusion:

Because we understand the struggle more clearly, we possess the right to decide for everyone else.

This is the vanguard problem.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes between **leadership** and **substitution**.

Leadership proposes.

Substitution commands.

Leadership persuades.

Substitution intimidates.

Leadership accepts that the people may reject its program.

Substitution declares rejection to be false consciousness or betrayal.

Leadership creates new participants.

Substitution creates followers.

Leadership seeks to become unnecessary.

Substitution makes itself permanent.

An armed vanguard faces an even greater danger because it possesses coercive capacity.

Political disagreement no longer occurs between equal participants.

One side has the ability to impose consequences.

The movement may still describe itself as the expression of the people, but the relationship has changed.

The people become an audience.

Then a resource.

Then a territory to be controlled.

Then a population to be disciplined.

This transformation does not happen automatically.

But the structural danger is always present.

VIII. Clandestinity and the Closed World

Underground organization creates necessity.

Members must protect identities.

Information must be restricted.

Security procedures must be followed.

Trust must be controlled.

Communication must be compartmentalized.

Under conditions of repression, these practices may be essential for survival.

But clandestinity creates a social world.

The militant begins to live between two realities.

There is ordinary society.

And there is the organization.

Ordinary friendships may become security risks.

Family members may know little.

Every unfamiliar person may be suspected.

Arrest becomes a permanent possibility.

The organization becomes the place where the militant feels truly understood.

This creates extraordinary loyalty.

It can also create isolation.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **organizational enclosure**.

The enclosed organization increasingly receives information from itself.

Members speak primarily with people who share the same assumptions.

Doubt becomes dangerous.

Criticism may be interpreted as weakness.

Weakness may be interpreted as a security threat.

The world outside becomes simplified.

The organization becomes morally real.

Everyone else becomes abstract.

This psychological process is especially dangerous when combined with violence.

The person targeted by the organization may be known only through a category.

Police officer.

Informer.

Official.

Enemy.

Traitor.

The category hides the human being.

Distance makes killing easier.

IX. The Movement and the People

Every revolutionary organization claims some relationship to the people.

But what is the people?

The term can refer to the population.

The working class.

The nation.

The poor.

The politically conscious.

Supporters of the movement.

These meanings are often quietly substituted for one another.

An organization says it represents the people.

But when people disagree, it may redefine “the people” to mean only those who support the correct historical direction.

The actual population disappears.

An ideological population replaces it.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this abstraction.

The people are the people who actually exist.

They are contradictory.

They are sometimes afraid.

They are sometimes misinformed.

They can make mistakes.

They can be manipulated.

But they cannot be replaced by an imaginary population that always agrees with the organization.

Democracy is difficult precisely because real people are difficult.

The temptation of the vanguard is to create a theoretical people easier to govern than the living population.

This temptation must be resisted.

X. Action and the Desire to Break Stagnation

Young revolutionary movements often develop a cult of action.

The existing political world appears frozen.

Debate seems useless.

Older organizations appear passive.

The activist wants to do something.

Action itself begins to acquire moral value.

To act is courageous.

To wait is cowardly.

To question is weakness.

To compromise is betrayal.

This atmosphere can accelerate escalation.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes between **action** and **effective action**.

Not every dramatic act changes society in the desired direction.

Some actions strengthen the institutions they are intended to weaken.

Some isolate movements.

Some create fear among the very population whose support is needed.

Some give the state justification for expanded repression.

Some transform activists psychologically before transforming society politically.

The revolutionary must therefore ask:

What does this action actually produce?

Not:

What does this action make us feel?

This distinction is essential.

Political violence can produce a powerful sense of agency among people who previously felt powerless.

That psychological transformation may be mistaken for strategic success.

The militant feels history moving.

The population may feel fear.

These are not the same thing.

XI. The First Threshold

Every organization that moves toward violence encounters a threshold.

Before the threshold, violence is theoretical.

After the threshold, it becomes institutional experience.

Plans have been made.

Roles have been assigned.

Secrets are shared.

Risks have been accepted.

Consequences become real.

Once crossed, returning is difficult.

The organization develops people experienced in clandestine action.

The state responds.

Arrests occur.

Prisoners become symbols.

Members are killed.

Funerals become political events.

Retaliation becomes expected.

Memory accumulates.

Each new event becomes justification for the next.

The organization begins to develop its own history.

This is the beginning of institutional momentum.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes that the first act of political violence should never be treated as merely one event among others.

It changes the field.

The state changes.

The movement changes.

The public changes.

The participant changes.

Violence creates obligations within organizations.

The dead cannot be allowed to have died for nothing.

Therefore the struggle must continue.

The prisoners cannot be abandoned.

Therefore the struggle must continue.

The enemy has retaliated.

Therefore the struggle must continue.

Soon the continuation of struggle becomes proof that earlier sacrifices had meaning.

Ending violence begins to appear as betrayal of the dead.

The past takes the future hostage.

XII. The Organization Takes Form

By establishing ETA, its founders created more than a name.

They created a new political subject.

The organization could issue statements.

Recruit members.

Develop doctrine.

Create internal structures.

Form strategic plans.

Discipline participants.

Interpret events.

Speak in the name of liberation.

This is the moment when an important distinction appears.

A movement is a broad social current.

An organization is a structure.

Structures possess interests.

They seek survival.

They defend leadership.

They preserve internal narratives.

They accumulate resources.

They create traditions.

They develop mechanisms for reproducing themselves.

This does not mean organizations are inherently corrupt.

Collective action requires organization.

But Moshe Reed Thought insists that organization must remain subordinate to purpose.

The question must always be asked:

Does the organization still serve liberation?

Or has liberation become the justification for preserving the organization?

The distinction may not be visible at first.

It becomes visible over time.

XIII. The Unfinished Meaning of Freedom

At the moment of ETA's formation, the word freedom contained unresolved possibilities.

Freedom from dictatorship.

Freedom for the Basque language.

Freedom from centralized rule.

Freedom through independence.

Freedom from capitalism.

Freedom through socialism.

Freedom through revolution.

These meanings could coexist temporarily because the immediate enemy appeared clear.

But movements held together by opposition eventually face the problem of positive construction.

What society should replace the existing order?

Who governs?

How is power distributed?

What happens to political opponents?

What rights belong to minorities?

How is the economy organized?

What happens if the population rejects the revolutionary program?

What limits exist upon the organization?

Who investigates abuses?

Who protects the dissident?

These questions determine whether liberation becomes freedom or merely succession.

Moshe Reed Thought judges every revolutionary movement according to its answer to a simple question:

Can the person say no?

Can the worker say no to the party?

Can the village say no to the central government?

Can the member say no to the leader?

Can the citizen say no to the nationalist movement?

Can the believer say no to the religious institution?

Can the community say no to the corporation?

Can the individual refuse participation without becoming an enemy?

Where the answer is no, domination has already begun.

XIV. Toward Basque Homeland and Freedom

The founding of ETA marked a new stage in Basque political history.

A generation had moved beyond dissatisfaction.

It had created an organization.

The organization had a name.

The name contained a homeland.

The name contained freedom.

But neither word yet determined the path.

The path would be created through choices.

Ideological debates would intensify.

Nationalism would interact with revolutionary socialism.

The language of anti-colonial struggle would influence political interpretation.

The organization would experience divisions.

The meaning of revolutionary action would change.

The relationship between cultural work and armed struggle would be transformed.

The central question would become increasingly unavoidable:

If the homeland must be liberated, who possesses the authority to define liberation?

ETA would answer:

The revolutionary movement.

Moshe Reed Thought answers differently:

The people themselves, through living, participatory, democratic institutions rooted in communities and workplaces.

This disagreement is not minor.

It is the difference between liberation as participation and liberation as historical guardianship.

ETA began with the conviction that a people required freedom.

The tragedy of its later history would emerge from the growing conviction that an organization could determine, through force, what that freedom required.

The transformation was not complete in 1959.

But the structure had been created.

The organization existed.

The underground world had begun.

Chapter 5

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna: Basque Homeland and Freedom

A political organization reveals itself through the words it chooses.

Names are declarations.

They define the world as the organization understands it.

They identify what must be defended, what must be changed, and what future must be created.

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna joined two concepts:

homeland and **freedom**.

The relationship between these concepts formed the ideological heart of the organization.

The homeland was understood as unfree.

Freedom therefore required liberation.

But liberation from what?

From dictatorship?

From the centralized Spanish state?

From French authority in the northern Basque territories?

From capitalism?

From class domination?

From cultural assimilation?

From foreign military alliances?

From all of these simultaneously?

Over time, different currents within ETA and the broader radical nationalist milieu gave different emphasis to these questions. The movement's ideology evolved, divided, recombined, and radicalized.

This complexity is important because organizations often present themselves as historically continuous even when their internal ideas have changed substantially.

The name remains.

The flag remains.

The symbols remain.

But the meaning changes.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore asks not only what an organization calls itself, but what relationships of power exist beneath its language.

A movement may speak of freedom while creating fear.

A state may speak of unity while imposing silence.

A party may speak of workers while excluding workers from decisions.

A nationalist movement may speak of the people while refusing to accept the people's disagreement.

The word freedom is not self-executing.

It must be given institutional form.

The history of ETA is partly the history of the widening distance between freedom as an ideal and coercion as a method.

I. What Is a Homeland?

A homeland is not merely land.

If homeland meant only territory, an empty field would be politically complete.

But homeland requires relationship.

A place becomes home because human beings live within it, remember it, name it, work upon it, bury their dead within it, create stories about it, and pass those stories between generations.

Homeland is therefore a relationship between people, place, and memory.

Moshe Reed Thought defines homeland as **a historically formed space of belonging in which human communities reproduce material life, culture, memory, and social relationship across generations**.

This definition is deliberately different from the territorial definition of the state.

The state asks:

Where does jurisdiction end?

The homeland asks:

Where does belonging live?

These questions may produce different maps.

A state boundary is legal.

A cultural boundary is historical and social.

A linguistic boundary may shift.

An economic region may cross both.

This creates difficulty.

There is no perfect political geometry in which every cultural community possesses a completely separate territory without minorities, migration, mixed families, overlapping identities, or disputed spaces.

Therefore, nationalism must confront pluralism.

A homeland may be real without being pure.

A people may be distinct without being isolated.

A community may deserve self-government without pretending that every resident shares one identity.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that a liberated homeland must remain a home for disagreement.

Otherwise, homeland becomes ideological territory.

II. The Meaning of Askatasuna

Freedom is one of the most powerful words in political language because nearly every movement claims it.

The capitalist speaks of market freedom.

The socialist speaks of freedom from exploitation.

The nationalist speaks of national freedom.

The liberal speaks of individual freedom.

The anarchist speaks of freedom from hierarchy.

The revolutionary speaks of freedom from the old order.

The state speaks of freedom protected by law.

Because the word is universal, it can conceal contradiction.

What does freedom actually mean?

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the idea that freedom is simply the absence of restraint.

A starving person may be legally free and materially powerless.

A worker may be formally free to leave employment while lacking any realistic alternative.

A cultural community may possess private freedom to speak its language while public institutions structurally marginalize that language.

A citizen may possess the right to vote while having little control over the economic institutions determining daily life.

Freedom must therefore be substantive.

It requires capacity.

Time.

Security.

Participation.

Education.

Housing.

Community.

Access to culture.

The ability to dissent.

The ability to leave.

The ability to speak.

The ability to organize.

The ability to refuse.

National independence may contribute to freedom.

It does not automatically create it.

A new flag can fly above an old factory.

A new anthem can be played while the worker remains powerless.

A revolutionary government can speak a national language while silencing political opponents.

A socialist state can abolish private capital while creating bureaucratic domination.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore distinguishes **national sovereignty** from **human liberation**.

The first may be part of the second.

It cannot substitute for it.

III. The Territorial Imagination

ETA's political imagination extended beyond the existing autonomous and administrative arrangements of the states governing Basque territories.

The envisioned Basque homeland was understood through a broader territorial conception of Euskal Herria.

This created a fundamental conflict with existing state sovereignty.

From the perspective of the Spanish and French states, territorial integrity belonged to established constitutional and legal orders.

From the perspective of revolutionary Basque nationalism, those borders represented political structures imposed upon a people whose homeland preceded them.

Here we encounter one of the most difficult problems in political philosophy.

Which historical boundary possesses legitimacy?

The current border?

The older border?

The linguistic region?

The area claimed by a national movement?

The territory in which a referendum produces majority support?

The municipality?

The province?

The historical region?

Every answer creates another question.

Moshe Reed Thought approaches this problem through **subsidiarity and democratic consent**.

Political association should occur at the lowest practical level consistent with human rights and necessary coordination.

A municipality should possess meaningful authority.

Regions should possess meaningful authority.

Larger federations should perform functions requiring broader cooperation.

Questions of sovereignty should be resolved through democratic processes rather than armed imposition.

This principle produces no magical answer to every territorial dispute.

But it rejects two dangerous absolutes.

The first is:

Existing borders can never change.

The second is:

An armed movement has the right to change borders for everyone.

Both substitute institutional power for popular consent.

IV. Independence as a Political Horizon

For ETA, independence became central.

But independence is both a negative and positive concept.

Negatively, it means freedom from external rule.

Positively, it requires an answer to the question:

What comes next?

Who governs the independent society?

What kind of economy exists?

What happens to political minorities?

What relationship exists between municipalities and the national government?

How are workers represented?

What rights belong to speakers of different languages?

What relationship exists with neighboring states?

What happens to those who opposed independence?

These questions cannot be postponed indefinitely.

A liberation movement may unify people through opposition to an external authority.

After victory, internal contradictions return.

Class conflict returns.

Regional differences return.

Religious differences return.

Ideological differences return.

The movement discovers that the nation was never one political mind.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore insists that the institutions of freedom must be practiced before independence, not invented afterward.

If a movement desires participatory democracy, it must practice participation.

If it desires worker control, workers must possess real influence within the movement's social institutions.

If it desires pluralism, dissent must be protected before victory.

If it desires decentralization, the organization cannot demand total obedience to a centralized command structure while promising decentralization later.

The future is rehearsed in the present.

V. The Revolutionary Interpretation of the Basque Question

As ETA's ideology developed, national liberation increasingly interacted with revolutionary socialist analysis.

The Basque question was no longer interpreted solely as a conflict between a nation and a centralized state.

It was also interpreted through capitalism, class struggle, imperialism, and revolutionary transformation.

This expanded the movement's ambitions.

The objective was not simply to transfer political administration from one capital to another.

The goal increasingly became revolutionary social transformation.

From the perspective of Moshe Reed Thought, this development contained both insight and danger.

The insight was that national independence alone does not eliminate economic domination.

A local capitalist can exploit a local worker.

A nationally independent government can serve concentrated wealth.

A culturally liberated nation can remain socially unequal.

The danger was the belief that an armed revolutionary organization could become the historical agent authorized to impose the transformation.

This is the central divide between Moshe Reed Thought and revolutionary vanguardism.

Both may criticize capitalism.

Both may support cultural self-determination.

Both may oppose imperial domination.

But they disagree fundamentally about political agency.

The vanguard says:

The organization possesses revolutionary consciousness and must lead society through the necessary historical transformation.

Moshe Reed Thought says:

No organization can substitute itself for the participatory self-government of workers and communities.

Liberation cannot be delivered to passive people.

It must be practiced by active communities.

VI. National Liberation and Socialism

The attempted synthesis of nationalism and socialism produces difficult questions.

If the working class is international, why should it organize nationally?

If the nation contains classes with opposing economic interests, how can national unity be maintained?

If independence requires broad alliances, should class struggle be postponed?

If socialism requires worker solidarity across borders, how should national antagonism be prevented from dividing workers?

These questions do not possess easy answers.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes the concept of **rooted internationalism**.

Rooted internationalism rejects both rootless abstraction and chauvinist isolation.

A person can love a language without hating another language.

A worker can defend local community while cooperating with workers elsewhere.

A region can seek autonomy while participating in broader federations.

A nation can preserve culture without constructing racial hierarchy.

Internationalism should not demand cultural disappearance.

National identity should not demand international hostility.

The commonwealth begins locally and federates outward.

This differs from centralized internationalism, which often reproduces the same political problem at a larger scale.

A distant bureaucracy does not become democratic merely because it speaks in universal language.

Real internationalism must connect self-governing communities.

It must not dissolve them.

VII. The Colonial Analogy

Revolutionary nationalist movements frequently interpret their condition through the language of colonialism.

The analogy can possess explanatory power.

It can also create distortion.

Classical colonial situations often involve conquest, external administration, racial hierarchy, resource extraction, settlement, and the political exclusion of colonized populations.

European internal national conflicts possess different histories and structures.

The language of colonialism may illuminate certain power relationships while obscuring others.

Moshe Reed Thought warns against **analogy becoming identity**.

Two situations can share features without being the same.

Revolutionary theory often travels through analogy.

Activists study another struggle and recognize themselves within it.

The foreign revolutionary becomes a mirror.

The tactics of one conflict are imported into another.

But strategy cannot be copied mechanically.

A society with mass electoral institutions is not identical to a colonial territory denied all representation.

A dictatorship is not identical to a democracy.

An occupation army is not identical to every police institution.

An unpopular state is not identical to a socially isolated colonial administration.

The failure to recognize changing conditions can preserve violence after its original justification has weakened.

This would become one of the most serious problems in ETA's later history.

VIII. Freedom and the Gun

At some point, every armed movement develops a relationship between its political ideal and its weapon.

At first, the weapon is described as a tool.

A temporary necessity.

A response to repression.

A means of awakening the population.

A method of imposing costs upon the state.

But weapons create institutions around themselves.

Security structures.

Financing systems.

Recruitment methods.

Safe houses.

Internal discipline.

Intelligence gathering.

Punishment mechanisms.

Prisoner support networks.

Martyr narratives.

The gun becomes more than an object.

It becomes the center of an organizational ecosystem.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this the **institutionalization of force**.

Once force is institutionalized, abandoning it threatens more than strategy.

It threatens identity.

What is an armed organization without arms?

What happens to the sacrifices of imprisoned members?

What happens to the memory of the dead?

What happens to leaders whose authority developed through clandestine struggle?

What happens to supporters whose identity was built around resistance?

The organization may continue violence partly because ending violence requires becoming something else.

Transformation can feel like death.

Thus the movement seeking freedom becomes imprisoned by its own instrument.

IX. The Problem of Representation

ETA claimed to struggle for Basque liberation.

But who authorizes an organization to represent a nation?

This question becomes especially urgent when the nation itself is politically divided.

If some Basques support independence, some support autonomy, some support existing constitutional arrangements, and many hold mixed or changing views, what does it mean for one organization to act in the name of the people?

The revolutionary answer is often:

The politically conscious minority understands the historical interests of the people before the majority does.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this answer.

A population is not a child.

Political disagreement cannot be solved by declaring one side historically immature.

The people possess the right to make political choices that revolutionaries dislike.

Without this right, self-determination becomes meaningless.

An organization cannot defend national freedom by denying political freedom within the nation.

This contradiction became increasingly visible as armed struggle continued.

The organization claimed to represent the people.

But people who opposed its methods could become targets of intimidation.

The nation became both the subject of liberation and the environment in which organizational discipline operated.

This is the moment when liberation risks becoming guardianship.

The organization says:

We fight for you.

The population replies:

We do not want this method.

The organization answers:

You do not yet understand why the method is necessary.

The contradiction is complete.

X. The Goal and the Method

Political movements often separate ends from means.

The end is justice.

The means are temporary.

The end is freedom.

The means are coercive.

The end is democracy.

The organization is hierarchical.

The end is peace.

The strategy requires escalation.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the complete separation of means and ends.

This does not mean that every political action must already resemble the final society in every detail.

Struggle creates difficult conditions.

Defense may be necessary.

Institutions may require discipline.

But there must be continuity between the relationships practiced during struggle and the relationships desired afterward.

A movement that systematically trains people to obey does not prepare them to participate.

A movement that treats dissent as betrayal does not prepare pluralist democracy.

A movement that reduces enemies to categories does not prepare reconciliation.

A movement that finances itself through coercion does not prepare voluntary solidarity.

A movement that kills civilians cannot restore those lives by describing the future society it hopes to build.

The method enters the goal.

The road changes the traveler.

XI. The Moshe Reed Doctrine of National Freedom

Through the history of ETA, Moshe Reed Thought develops a different conception of national liberation.

National freedom consists of several interconnected principles.

A people has the right to preserve and develop its language.

A cultural community has the right to maintain institutions through which memory can be transmitted.

Regions should possess meaningful self-government.

Municipalities should possess substantial local authority.

Workers should participate directly in economic institutions.

Cooperatives should form a major part of economic life.

Questions of sovereignty should be decided democratically.

Political minorities must retain rights regardless of constitutional outcome.

No armed organization may substitute itself for the population.

No central state may declare its borders metaphysically permanent.

No nation may define itself through racial purity.

No revolutionary party may declare itself the exclusive consciousness of the people.

No political objective can erase the human reality of those harmed in its pursuit.

This is liberation without substitution.

Rootedness without chauvinism.

Socialism without bureaucratic absolutism.

National dignity without national hatred.

Internationalism without cultural erasure.

XII. The Expanding Meaning of Revolution

As ETA developed, the word freedom expanded.

The struggle was increasingly interpreted not merely as cultural preservation or national restoration but as revolutionary transformation.

This expansion gave the movement ideological energy.

It connected local struggle to global currents.

It offered a total explanation of oppression.

It identified the state, capitalism, imperialism, and national domination as interconnected structures.

Total explanations are powerful.

They are also dangerous.

When everything becomes part of one system, every opponent becomes part of one enemy.

The police officer becomes the state.

The business owner becomes capitalism.

The political opponent becomes reaction.

The journalist becomes propaganda.

The dissident becomes collaboration.

The person disappears inside the category.

Moshe Reed Thought opposes categorical dehumanization.

Structures are real.

Capitalism is a structure.

The state is a structure.

Class power is real.

National oppression can be real.

But structures operate through human beings who retain individual complexity.

Analysis must identify systems without turning every individual inside those systems into an interchangeable target.

The ability to preserve this distinction is one of the moral tests of revolutionary politics.

ETA would repeatedly fail this test.

The state would also commit serious abuses in the course of the conflict.

One injustice would be used to justify another.

The cycle would deepen.

XIII. Homeland and Freedom Reconsidered

The words in ETA's name remain powerful because the desires they express are human desires.

People want a home.

People want freedom.

The tragedy lies not in these desires.

The tragedy lies in the political belief that freedom can be produced indefinitely through fear.

A homeland is not liberated when people become afraid to disagree.

A language is not honored when it becomes a test of ideological purity.

A worker is not liberated when organizations speak in the worker's name without allowing the worker meaningful control.

A nation is not free when the state suppresses its identity.

A nation is also not free when an armed minority claims authority over its political future.

Freedom must be measured in lived relationships.

Can people speak?

Can they organize?

Can they disagree?

Can they participate?

Can they preserve culture?

Can they control meaningful parts of economic life?

Can they criticize institutions?

Can they remember victims on every side?

Can they refuse political demands without fear?

These questions are more important than flags.

They are more important than manifestos.

They are more important than the survival of any organization.

ETA had chosen a name that united homeland and freedom.

The unresolved question was whether its developing methods could create the freedom it named.

Chapter 6

Nationalism Meets Revolutionary Socialism

Revolutionary movements rarely remain ideologically unchanged.

They begin with grievances.

Then they search for explanations.

Explanations become theories.

Theories identify systems.

Systems imply strategies.

Strategies create organizations.

Organizations produce their own interests, habits, loyalties, and internal cultures.

ETA emerged from radical Basque nationalism, but it developed during an era in which revolutionary socialism, anti-colonial struggle, Marxist analysis, guerrilla warfare, and theories of national liberation possessed enormous international influence.

The result was an attempted synthesis.

The Basque struggle would not be understood only as a struggle for cultural preservation.

Nor only as a struggle against dictatorship.

Nor only as a demand for independence.

Increasingly, the struggle was interpreted as part of a wider revolutionary confrontation involving class, capitalism, imperialism, national domination, and the political organization of the working population.

This ideological development gave ETA a broader theory of society.

It also created contradictions.

Could nationalism and socialism truly be reconciled?

Was the primary revolutionary subject the Basque nation or the working class?

Could a capitalist who supported Basque independence be considered an ally?

Could a Spanish-speaking worker in the Basque Country become part of the revolutionary national community?

Would independence come before socialism?

Would socialism come before independence?

Could both be achieved simultaneously?

Who would lead the transformation?

The people?

The working class?

The revolutionary organization?

These were not academic disputes.

They concerned the structure of the movement, its social alliances, its strategy, and its definition of the enemy.

Through Moshe Reed Thought, the meeting of nationalism and revolutionary socialism reveals a deeper political problem:

How can a movement defend a particular community without abandoning universal human solidarity, and how can it pursue economic transformation without replacing

popular self-government with the authority of a revolutionary vanguard?

The question remains relevant far beyond the history of ETA.

I. Two Languages of Liberation

Nationalism and socialism begin from different questions.

Nationalism asks:

Who are the people, and who possesses the right to govern them?

Socialism asks:

Who controls production, wealth, and the conditions of material life?

The first emphasizes political community.

The second emphasizes class relations.

The nationalist sees domination in the relationship between nation and state.

The socialist sees domination in the relationship between labor and capital.

These perspectives can conflict.

A nationalist may ask a worker to unite with a capitalist of the same nation for the sake of independence.

A socialist may ask a culturally marginalized worker to postpone questions of language and autonomy for the sake of international class unity.

Both demands can become forms of silencing.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the forced choice.

A person is not only a worker.

A person is also not only a member of a nation.

Human beings exist within several relationships simultaneously.

They work.

They speak languages.

They live in places.

They form families.

They inherit memories.

They participate in cultures.

They need housing.

They need time.

They need community.

They need meaningful participation in institutions.

A political theory that recognizes only one dimension of the human person will eventually sacrifice the others.

The challenge is synthesis without reduction.

II. The Limits of Bourgeois Nationalism

From a revolutionary socialist perspective, conventional nationalism contains a fundamental contradiction.

The nation may be politically subordinate while remaining internally divided by class.

The worker and capitalist may share a language while possessing opposing economic interests.

They may sing the same anthem while one owns the factory and the other sells labor within it.

They may support the same flag while living in completely different material worlds.

National independence does not automatically abolish these differences.

A new state can reproduce old class relationships.

The government changes.

The ownership structure remains.

The administrative language changes.

The worker still receives orders.

The flag above the institution changes.

The institution itself remains hierarchical.

This criticism influenced revolutionary nationalist movements across the twentieth century.

Moshe Reed Thought accepts much of the criticism.

Political sovereignty without economic democracy is incomplete.

A person who votes for a government but spends most waking hours under authoritarian workplace structures experiences only partial democracy.

A region may possess a parliament while investment decisions remain controlled by concentrated private wealth.

A nation may become independent while international finance determines the limits of its policy.

Therefore, liberation must address ownership and power.

But Moshe Reed Thought rejects the conclusion that state ownership alone solves the problem.

Replacing private bureaucracy with public bureaucracy does not automatically create worker control.

A nationalized factory in which workers possess no meaningful decision-making power remains hierarchical.

The name of the owner changes.

The experience of command may not.

The goal must therefore be deeper:

economic democracy.

Worker participation.

Cooperative ownership.

Public institutions accountable to communities.

Municipal and regional planning.

Social guarantees.

Limits upon concentrated wealth.

The commonwealth economy is neither the private empire of capital nor the administrative empire of an unaccountable central bureaucracy.

III. The Limits of Abstract Internationalism

Socialist internationalism carries a powerful ethical principle:

Workers should not be divided by national hatred.

The worker in one country does not become the natural enemy of a worker in another merely because governments disagree.

This principle is essential.

Yet internationalism can become abstract when it ignores cultural power.

A worker can be economically exploited and culturally marginalized simultaneously.

A language can disappear within a capitalist society.

It can also disappear within a centralized socialist state.

Economic equality does not automatically preserve cultural diversity.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore distinguishes between **international solidarity** and **administrative universalism**.

International solidarity connects communities.

Administrative universalism dissolves communities into a centralized structure claiming to represent everyone equally.

The difference is important.

Equality can become a language of assimilation.

The state says:

Everyone is equal, therefore no distinct cultural rights are necessary.

But if one language dominates administration, education, media, and employment, formal equality may conceal structural inequality.

A small language community does not survive merely because no law explicitly prohibits its language.

It requires institutions.

Schools.

Publishing.

Cultural organizations.

Public use.

Intergenerational transmission.

Thus, Moshe Reed Thought proposes rooted internationalism:

Love your language.

Learn another.

Defend your community.

Cooperate with neighboring communities.

Build local institutions.

Federate outward.

Reject racial superiority.

Reject cultural erasure.

Reject imperial domination.

Reject national hatred.

This is solidarity among rooted peoples rather than uniformity imposed upon them.

IV. The Revolutionary Subject

Every revolutionary theory eventually answers a question:

Who makes the revolution?

The working class?

The peasantry?

The colonized people?

The nation?

The party?

The guerrilla organization?

A coalition?

The answer determines strategy.

If the working class is the revolutionary subject, labor organization becomes central.

If the nation is the revolutionary subject, national unity becomes central.

If the party is the bearer of revolutionary consciousness, organizational discipline becomes central.

If the guerrilla organization believes armed action can awaken the population, military initiative becomes central.

ETA's ideological development involved tensions between these possibilities.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the idea that any permanent organization can become the subject of history on behalf of everyone else.

Organizations are instruments.

The people are subjects.

Workers must organize themselves.

Communities must govern themselves.

Political movements can educate, coordinate, propose, and defend.

They cannot permanently substitute themselves for participation.

The revolutionary subject is not a mystical category.

It is the actual population becoming capable of collective self-government.

This process is slower than vanguardism.

It is less dramatic.

It does not produce the same heroic mythology.

But a society that cannot govern itself before the revolution will not magically learn participation after receiving orders from revolutionaries.

Democracy is a practice.

V. Class and Nation

Suppose a Basque worker and a Spanish-speaking worker labor beside one another in the same industrial workplace.

What relationship matters more?

The nationalist may emphasize cultural difference.

The socialist may emphasize shared class position.

Moshe Reed Thought asks a different question:

Why must one relationship erase the other?

The workers share an economic condition.

They may possess different cultural histories.

Solidarity should be constructed through common struggle without demanding cultural disappearance.

This requires political maturity.

The Basque-speaking worker should not treat the migrant worker as an enemy merely because of origin.

The migrant worker should not treat local language preservation as hostility.

The employer should not be allowed to use cultural difference to divide labor.

The state should not use the presence of linguistic diversity as an excuse to marginalize the regional language.

The nationalist movement should not treat every non-Basque speaker as politically suspect.

The socialist movement should not dismiss national identity as automatically reactionary.

The commonwealth approach seeks solidarity without homogenization.

This is more difficult than declaring one contradiction primary.

Reality is difficult.

Political theory must become capable of complexity rather than demanding that life become simpler for the convenience of theory.

VI. The Influence of Anti-Colonial Revolution

The twentieth century was an age of collapsing empires and national liberation movements.

Across Africa, Asia, and elsewhere, anti-colonial movements challenged imperial powers.

Some used mass civil resistance.

Some used armed struggle.

Some combined political and military strategies.

Some produced democratic states.

Some produced one-party governments.

Some achieved independence while remaining economically dependent.

Some entered civil wars after liberation.

For European revolutionary nationalists, these struggles offered powerful examples.

The small nation confronting the larger state could imagine itself within a global historical pattern.

But Moshe Reed Thought warns that analogy can become intoxication.

The activist sees another revolutionary struggle and recognizes familiar emotional structures:

oppression,

resistance,

martyrdom,

liberation.

Differences become secondary.

The movement begins to import language.

Then strategy.

Then organizational models.

But political methods cannot be separated from context.

A tactic used against a colonial army in one historical setting cannot automatically be transferred to a different society without producing different consequences.

Revolutionary internationalism sometimes mistakes similarity of aspiration for identity of conditions.

The result can be strategic blindness.

VII. Marxism and Historical Certainty

Marxist analysis provided revolutionary movements with powerful tools for understanding class, capital, exploitation, and historical development.

But Marxism, like every intellectual tradition, contains multiple interpretations.

It can be used as a method of analysis.

It can also be transformed into a closed historical theology.

In the closed form, history becomes a predetermined process.

Classes possess assigned roles.

The revolutionary organization interprets historical necessity.

Political opponents become representatives of doomed social forces.

Compromise becomes betrayal of history itself.

Moshe Reed Thought draws from materialist analysis while rejecting historical fatalism.

History has structures.

It does not possess a script.

Capitalism creates tendencies.

It does not create guaranteed outcomes.

Class conflict is real.

It does not eliminate moral agency.

Human beings act within conditions they did not choose, but their actions remain choices.

This distinction matters because historical certainty can become a justification for cruelty.

If victory is inevitable, opponents are merely obstacles.

If the organization embodies the future, resistance to the organization becomes resistance to history.

If suffering accelerates historical development, suffering becomes strategically acceptable.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects every politics that converts living people into material for historical necessity.

No theory can resurrect the dead.

VIII. The Party and the Gun

Traditional revolutionary socialism often assigns a central role to the party.

Guerrilla theory assigns a central role to armed struggle.

When these forms combine with revolutionary nationalism, a powerful structure emerges.

The nation provides identity.

Socialism provides social analysis.

Revolution provides historical mission.

The organization provides discipline.

The weapon provides immediate power.

Each element reinforces the others.

The danger is equally powerful.

The organization may begin to believe that because its analysis is revolutionary, its actions are justified.

Because its goal is national liberation, criticism aids the oppressor.

Because its members take risks, they deserve authority.

Because the state uses violence, organizational violence becomes automatically legitimate.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this chain of reasoning.

Sacrifice does not create sovereignty.

Courage does not create infallibility.

Suffering does not create permanent innocence.

A person can risk life for a cause and still be wrong about strategy.

A prisoner can deserve humane treatment without every action of the prisoner's organization becoming legitimate.

A state can face real security threats and still commit abuses.

Moral judgment must remain active.

IX. Revolutionary Discipline

Every serious movement requires discipline.

Meetings must occur.

Responsibilities must be fulfilled.

Resources must be managed.

Security may be necessary.

Collective decisions require implementation.

The question is what kind of discipline exists.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes **participatory discipline** from **command discipline**.

Participatory discipline emerges from institutions in which people possess meaningful voice.

Command discipline emerges from hierarchical authority.

The first says:

We made this decision together and accept responsibility for carrying it out.

The second says:

The leadership has decided.

Underground armed organizations tend structurally toward command discipline.

Security requires restricted information.

Military operations require secrecy.

Members cannot vote publicly on clandestine activity.

The organization develops levels of knowledge.

Those at the center know more.

Those at the edges obey more.

This may be operationally effective.

But it creates a contradiction when the organization claims to be preparing a radically democratic society.

The form of organization trains the consciousness of its members.

Command produces commanders and followers.

Participation produces participants.

The contradiction cannot be solved merely by promising democracy after victory.

X. The National Bourgeoisie

Revolutionary nationalism confronts the question of the national capitalist class.

Should local capitalists be treated as allies against the central state?

Or as class enemies?

The answer depends partly upon whether the movement prioritizes national independence or social revolution.

A broad national front may include several classes.

A socialist revolution may divide those classes.

This contradiction has fractured liberation movements around the world.

Moshe Reed Thought approaches the question institutionally rather than morally.

The issue is not whether every business owner is personally evil.

The issue is whether concentrated ownership allows a small group to control the conditions of life of the majority.

Economic democracy requires limits upon concentrated power.

But social transformation should not be reduced to indiscriminate hostility toward individuals assigned to class categories.

The objective is structural change.

Cooperative conversion.

Worker ownership.

Public utilities.

Municipal enterprises.

Social guarantees.

Democratic planning.

Support for small-scale productive activity compatible with commonwealth goals.

The aim is to dissolve domination, not to create new categories of people who may be treated without moral restraint.

XI. Violence as Revolutionary Communication

Some revolutionary theories treat violence not merely as force but as communication.

An attack demonstrates that the state is vulnerable.

The state responds with repression.

Repression exposes the nature of the state.

The population becomes radicalized.

The revolutionary movement grows.

This theory is strategically seductive because even enemy retaliation can be interpreted as success.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies the danger immediately.

A strategy that depends upon provoking suffering among the population treats people as instruments.

If repression is expected to radicalize society, then increased suffering can become strategically useful.

The movement may claim to defend the people while adopting a strategy that requires the people to experience greater repression.

This is an ethical contradiction.

It is also strategically uncertain.

Repression can radicalize.

It can also produce fear.

Exhaustion.

Withdrawal.

Hostility toward the militants.

Demand for stronger security measures.

Political polarization.

There is no mechanical law.

Human beings are not predictable material.

The next part of this book will examine this revolutionary theory of action and reaction in greater depth.

XII. The Moshe Reed Synthesis

Moshe Reed Thought accepts several insights from the encounter between nationalism and socialism.

Culture matters.

Language matters.

Class matters.

Ownership matters.

Empire matters.

Centralization matters.

Worker power matters.

Community matters.

But it rejects the conclusion that liberation requires an armed vanguard possessing historical authority.

Its alternative synthesis can be summarized as follows.

The community is culturally rooted but politically open.

The economy is socialized through cooperative, municipal, regional, and accountable public institutions.

The workplace becomes democratic.

The municipality becomes politically meaningful.

Regions possess substantial autonomy.

Larger structures are federated.

Cultural communities possess the institutions necessary for survival.

Migration is addressed through integration rather than exclusion or forced assimilation.

International solidarity connects communities without dissolving them.

Political change is built through mass participation.

Force, where legitimate defense becomes unavoidable, remains strictly subordinate to accountable civil institutions and human dignity.

No party becomes the state.

No organization becomes the people.

No leader becomes history.

This is the difference between revolutionary commonwealth and revolutionary substitutionism.

XIII. The Contradiction Deepens

By combining national liberation with revolutionary socialism, ETA expanded its political horizon.

It no longer sought merely preservation.

It sought transformation.

But the greater the ambition, the greater the danger of substitution.

If the entire society must be transformed, someone must decide what transformation means.

If the population does not yet support the program, the revolutionary organization may decide to act ahead of it.

If action provokes repression, repression may be interpreted as proof that the strategy is working.

If the organization becomes isolated, isolation may be interpreted as evidence that the population lacks consciousness.

Thus, theory can protect strategy from reality.

Moshe Reed Thought insists upon the opposite relationship.

Reality must judge theory.

Human consequences must judge strategy.

The people must remain greater than the organization.

No movement can claim to liberate a population from the consequences of that population's own political choices.

Persuasion is slower than command.

Democracy is slower than conspiracy.

Cooperative construction is slower than destruction.

But speed is not the measure of liberation.

The question is what remains when the dramatic moment has passed.

Institutions?

Participation?

Trust?

Community?

Or graves?

XIV. Toward the Theory of Action and Reaction

The ideological development examined in this chapter prepared the way for a strategic theory that would shape the movement's relationship with the state.

The organization would act.

The state would react.

Repression would reveal the true nature of authority.

The population would recognize the contradiction.

Resistance would grow.

The cycle would intensify.

The revolutionary crisis would deepen.

This was the promise.

But human societies do not behave according to diagrams.

Every action creates consequences beyond the intention of those who planned it.

Every death enters a family.

Every arrest enters a community.

Every act of torture creates memory.

Every assassination creates memory.

Every bombing creates memory.

Every funeral creates memory.

The revolutionary theory of escalation assumes that these memories will move society in the desired political direction.

History is less obedient.

Chapter 7

The Revolutionary Theory of Action and Reaction

Every revolutionary strategy contains a theory of the population.

It assumes that people will respond to events in particular ways.

A strike will create solidarity.

A demonstration will reveal popular strength.

A boycott will weaken legitimacy.

An election will demonstrate support.

An armed attack will expose vulnerability.

Repression will produce anger.

Anger will produce resistance.

Resistance will produce greater repression.

Greater repression will produce wider resistance.

Eventually, according to some revolutionary theories, contradiction becomes crisis.

Crisis becomes revolution.

This is the theory of action and reaction.

Its logic is simple.

The revolutionary organization acts.

The state reacts.

The reaction exposes the coercive character of the state.

The population recognizes that ordinary political life is an illusion.

The movement gains support.

The struggle intensifies.

The state responds more severely.

The political middle disappears.

The population is forced to choose.

The revolutionary organization becomes stronger.

The state becomes increasingly isolated.

The final confrontation approaches.

As a theory, this can appear elegant.

As lived history, it means funerals.

Prisons.

Fear.

Suspicion.

Retaliation.

Broken families.

Police raids.

Threats.

Informers.

Exile.

Bombings.

Assassinations.

Torture allegations.

Political polarization.

Children growing up inside memories they did not create.

The central criticism offered by Moshe Reed Thought is that **a population is not a revolutionary mechanism**.

Human beings do not exist to confirm theory.

Their suffering cannot be treated as fuel for historical acceleration.

The theory of action and reaction becomes morally dangerous when increased repression is understood not only as an unfortunate consequence but as politically useful evidence.

At that moment, the people cease to be the purpose of liberation.

They become the terrain upon which organizations test their theories.

I. The Desire to Make History Move

Authoritarian systems often create the sensation that history has stopped.

The government appears permanent.

The opposition appears weak.

Institutions repeat themselves.

Public speech is controlled.

Established organizations seem incapable of producing change.

For young militants, this can create unbearable frustration.

They do not merely want change.

They want movement.

Action promises movement.

A clandestine operation can create the feeling that the apparently invulnerable state has been challenged.

The newspaper reports the event.

Police respond.

The government speaks.

People discuss what happened.

Suddenly, the movement appears to have forced history to move.

This psychological experience should not be underestimated.

Political violence can create a profound sense of agency among those who previously felt powerless.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the intoxication of agency**.

The militant experiences action as liberation from passivity.

But the psychological experience of the militant is not the same as the political experience of society.

The militant feels powerful.

The ordinary resident may feel afraid.

The militant sees escalation.

The worker may see another police checkpoint.

The organization sees strategic reaction.

The family sees a missing person.

Political strategy becomes dangerous when the emotions of the activist are mistaken for the consciousness of the population.

II. Provocation as Strategy

Provocation is based upon a calculation.

The state possesses overwhelming force.

The revolutionary organization cannot defeat it directly.

Therefore, the objective is not immediate military victory.

The objective is political transformation.

The organization acts in ways intended to provoke a response.

If the response is excessive, indiscriminate, or abusive, the state's legitimacy may weaken.

The population may become radicalized.

This dynamic has occurred in many historical conflicts.

State repression can strengthen insurgent movements.

Collective punishment can produce recruitment.

Torture can create lasting hatred.

Unlawful killings can transform victims into symbols.

But the existence of this dynamic does not make provocation ethically neutral.

If an organization knowingly adopts a strategy that depends upon predictable suffering among the population, it assumes responsibility for treating that suffering instrumentally.

The state remains responsible for its own abuses.

The organization remains responsible for its strategy.

Moshe Reed Thought refuses the moral escape in which each actor blames the other for every consequence.

The state says:

We were forced to repress because of terrorism.

The armed organization says:

We were forced to attack because of repression.

Both deny agency.

Both describe themselves as reactions.

But political actors make choices.

Responsibility cannot be outsourced indefinitely.

III. The State as Teacher of Revolution

Repressive states often become the greatest educators of their enemies.

A political pamphlet may convince one person.

An abusive arrest may convince a family.

A censored newspaper may convince readers that authority fears discussion.

A case of torture may radicalize an entire social network.

A government that responds indiscriminately to a small militant organization can expand the organization's social environment.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore insists that state power must be disciplined precisely when it feels most justified.

The existence of political violence does not suspend law.

Security institutions operating without accountability can become recruitment agencies for the movements they oppose.

This is not an argument for passivity toward violent organizations.

A society has the right to protect people.

Investigations, arrests, prosecutions, and lawful security measures can be legitimate.

The distinction is between accountable law and retaliatory power.

A democratic state must not become the mirror image of the organization it opposes.

If it does, the armed movement gains a powerful argument:

See, nothing has changed.

The state understands only force.

The state therefore has a strategic as well as ethical interest in remaining within law.

IV. The Revolutionary Laboratory

The most disturbing element of action-reaction theory is its experimental character.

The strategist imagines society as a field of variables.

Action A produces Reaction B.

Reaction B produces Consciousness C.

Consciousness C produces Mobilization D.

But society is not a machine.

People possess memory.

Fear.

Contradictory interests.

Different values.

Family responsibilities.

Economic needs.

Religious commitments.

Personal ambitions.

Exhaustion.

The same event can radicalize one person and depoliticize another.

A police raid can create a militant.

It can also create a supporter of stronger policing.

An assassination can inspire one activist.

It can disgust another.

A bombing can polarize a society.

It can also isolate the organization responsible.

There is no revolutionary mathematics capable of eliminating human unpredictability.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects every politics that treats suffering as a controlled variable.

The people are not a laboratory.

The revolutionary is not a scientist standing outside society.

The strategist is also morally inside the consequences.

V. The Disappearance of the Middle

Escalation strategies often seek polarization.

Moderate positions are considered obstacles.

Negotiation is treated as illusion.

The population must choose.

With us or against us.

Revolution or reaction.

Liberation or collaboration.

State or resistance.

Polarization can strengthen organizations at the extremes.

It weakens the social space in which plural politics exists.

This is one of the reasons both authoritarian states and armed organizations can benefit from a simplified political field.

The authoritarian state says:

There are only loyal citizens and terrorists.

The armed organization says:

There are only patriots and collaborators.

Both eliminate the independent citizen.

Moshe Reed Thought defends the political middle not as a specific ideology, but as **the social space of complexity**.

A person must be allowed to oppose state repression and armed violence simultaneously.

A person must be allowed to support Basque cultural rights while opposing independence.

A person must be allowed to support independence while rejecting ETA.

A person must be allowed to criticize police abuse without supporting armed struggle.

A person must be allowed to condemn an assassination without endorsing centralism.

When conflict makes these positions impossible, society loses political oxygen.

VI. Fear as a Political Result

Revolutionary theory often emphasizes consciousness.

But violence frequently produces fear before consciousness.

Fear changes behavior.

People avoid certain conversations.

They avoid certain places.

They avoid political meetings.

They remove signs from windows.

They refuse to speak publicly.

They move away.

They become cautious around strangers.

They begin to calculate which opinions are safe.

A movement may interpret silence as support.

A state may interpret silence as loyalty.

Both can be wrong.

Silence often means fear.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that political legitimacy cannot be measured in environments where disagreement carries danger.

A frightened population is not a politically conscious population.

Fear may produce obedience.

It does not produce freedom.

This principle applies equally to state repression and revolutionary intimidation.

VII. The Moral Arithmetic of Retaliation

Cycles of violence create their own arithmetic.

One of ours was killed.

Therefore one of theirs must be killed.

They imprisoned our members.

Therefore we must intensify operations.

They attacked our institution.

Therefore we must expand security measures.

Each side develops a ledger.

But suffering cannot be balanced.

One death does not cancel another.

A bomb does not reverse torture.

Torture does not reverse assassination.

A prison abuse does not resurrect a murdered official.

Retaliation creates additional victims.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the moral arithmetic of vengeance.

Justice requires responsibility.

Vengeance requires repetition.

The difference is accountability.

Justice asks:

Who did what?

What evidence exists?

What lawful and proportionate response is justified?

Vengeance asks:

Who belongs to the enemy category?

This distinction separates law from collective punishment.

It also separates legitimate resistance from indiscriminate retaliation.

VIII. Martyrdom and Organizational Memory

Escalation creates martyrs.

A militant dies.

The organization remembers.

A police officer dies.

The state remembers.

A civilian dies.

The family remembers.

Each death enters a different narrative.

The organization says sacrifice.

The state says service.

The family says absence.

The family perspective is often the most concrete.

Ideologies speak of history.

Families see an empty chair.

Moshe Reed Thought places the empty chair at the center of political ethics.

Every strategic theory must answer to the empty chair.

The chair does not debate ideology.

It does not issue manifestos.

It simply remains empty.

This is not an argument that all uses of force are morally identical.

Self-defense can be legitimate.

Protection of life can require force.

But political language must never become so abstract that death disappears behind terminology.

IX. The Self-Fulfilling Enemy

Action-reaction cycles create enemies.

The revolutionary expects the state to be repressive.

The state represses.

The revolutionary's worldview is confirmed.

The state expects the militant environment to be dangerous.

The organization attacks.

The state's worldview is confirmed.

Each side becomes the evidence needed by the other.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this the **closed dialectic of enemies**.

Within the closed dialectic, neither side needs to understand the other beyond the role assigned to it.

The state needs terrorists.

The armed organization needs oppressors.

Peace becomes threatening because peace destabilizes identity.

If the enemy changes, the organization must change.

If the conflict ends, careers, structures, loyalties, and narratives must be reconsidered.

This is why some conflicts persist beyond the conditions that originally produced them.

Institutions can become dependent upon enemies.

X. Repression and Recruitment

State repression can produce recruitment, but the relationship is not automatic.

The effect depends upon legitimacy, social networks, political alternatives, public perception, and the specific nature of repression.

Indiscriminate repression is especially dangerous because it expands the population with personal grievances.

A person previously uninterested in politics becomes involved because a relative was abused.

A family previously neutral becomes hostile.

A neighborhood develops collective resentment.

This process is one reason accountable policing matters.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the authoritarian fantasy that enough force can solve every political problem.

Force can suppress.

It cannot always persuade.

It can imprison a militant.

It cannot imprison a historical question.

But Moshe Reed Thought equally rejects the revolutionary fantasy that repression automatically produces victory.

A population can become exhausted.

It can reject both sides.

It can demand normal life.

It can become more conservative.

It can support stronger security measures.

History contains no guaranteed revolutionary reaction.

XI. The Ethics of Consequences

Political actors frequently judge themselves by intention.

We wanted liberation.

We wanted security.

We wanted order.

We wanted revolution.

We wanted national unity.

Moshe Reed Thought judges institutions also by foreseeable consequences.

Good intentions do not erase predictable harm.

If a strategy repeatedly produces civilian suffering, political isolation, fear, and intensified repression, the movement cannot indefinitely defend itself by repeating the purity of its goals.

If a state policy repeatedly produces unlawful abuse, radicalization, and distrust, the government cannot defend itself merely by invoking security.

Political maturity requires feedback.

Strategy must be revisable.

Institutions must be capable of admitting failure.

The organization that cannot admit error becomes dangerous.

The state that cannot admit wrongdoing becomes dangerous.

Accountability is the political form of humility.

XII. The Revolutionary Escalator

Escalation is easier than de-escalation.

A movement begins with symbolic resistance.

Then sabotage.

Then targeted violence.

Then broader operations.

Each stage creates justification for the next.

The state responds.

Police powers expand.

Surveillance increases.

Arrests multiply.

Special institutions develop.

The organization points to these developments as proof of oppression.

The state points to new attacks as proof of necessity.

The escalator moves upward.

But there is no automatic mechanism bringing it downward.

De-escalation requires decisions.

Someone must risk appearing weak.

Someone must speak to an enemy.

Someone must tell supporters that old methods no longer work.

Someone must accept that previous sacrifices do not require endless new sacrifices.

This requires greater courage than escalation mythology often admits.

It is easy to inherit a war.

It is difficult to end one.

XIII. Moshe Reed Thought and Revolutionary Patience

The alternative to action-reaction theory is not passivity.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes **constructive struggle**.

Constructive struggle builds institutions while resisting domination.

Language schools.

Worker organizations.

Cooperatives.

Tenant associations.

Municipal political movements.

Cultural institutions.

Independent media.

Legal defense networks.

Mutual aid.

Democratic assemblies.

Regional campaigns.

Nonviolent civil resistance where necessary.

These forms are slower than armed spectacle.

But they build capacity.

A bombing demonstrates destructive capacity.

A cooperative demonstrates governing capacity.

An assassination removes a person.

A democratic institution creates participants.

A clandestine cell produces secrecy.

A community assembly produces political experience.

The question is not whether confrontation can always be avoided.

History contains conditions in which communities face direct violence.

The question is what kind of society the struggle is already constructing.

XIV. When the Theory Becomes a Trap

Action-reaction theory contains a final danger.

Because state repression is expected, repression can validate the strategy.

If repression increases, the theory is correct.

If repression decreases, the movement may claim the state is becoming weaker or more deceptive.

If support grows, the theory is correct.

If support declines, the movement may claim fear or false consciousness.

The theory becomes protected from evidence.

At this point, strategy becomes faith.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects unfalsifiable politics.

A movement must be capable of asking:

Are we helping the people we claim to serve?

Are our methods increasing freedom?

Are communities stronger?

Are workers more capable of self-government?

Is cultural life expanding?

Are people participating voluntarily?

Or are we creating fear?

If the answers are unfavorable, the movement must change.

No martyr can make a failed strategy successful.

No prison sentence can make a harmful tactic wise.

No historical grievance can transform every future action into justice.

XV. Toward the Underground World

The theory of action and reaction required an organization capable of sustained clandestine struggle.

This meant secrecy.

Compartmentalization.

Recruitment.

Internal discipline.

Logistics.

Financing.

Safe locations.

Cross-border movement.

Intelligence.

Counterintelligence.

The underground organization would become a world within the world.

Its members would develop intense loyalty.

They would also face isolation.

Suspicion would become a survival skill.

The line between political disagreement and security threat could become increasingly thin.

The organization created to liberate society would gradually become separated from ordinary social life by the requirements of clandestinity.

Chapter 8

Underground Organization

An underground organization does not merely hide its activities.

It creates a second world.

There is the visible world of ordinary life: work, family, streets, shops, schools, religious communities, friendships, and public politics.

Then there is the hidden world.

Names change.

Information is restricted.

Trust becomes selective.

Silence becomes survival.

Friendship acquires political meaning.

A careless sentence can create danger.

An arrest can expose an entire network.

The person who enters clandestine political life therefore enters more than an organization.

The person enters a new reality.

For movements operating under authoritarian repression, secrecy may begin as necessity. Opposition activity can bring imprisonment, surveillance, exile, or worse. Underground structures can preserve movements that would otherwise be destroyed.

But secrecy has consequences.

Structures created for survival can develop into permanent political cultures.

The organization becomes divided between those who know and those who obey.

Information becomes authority.

Suspicion becomes discipline.

The hidden world begins to interpret the visible world from a distance.

For Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, clandestinity became fundamental to organizational existence. As the conflict developed, underground structures, exile, imprisonment, cross-border political geography, security pressure, and armed activity shaped the internal life of the movement.

Moshe Reed Thought examines this world not to provide operational instruction, but to understand a central political problem:

What does secrecy do to consciousness, and what happens when an organization created to liberate a people becomes structurally separated from ordinary life among that people?

I. The Necessity and Danger of Secrecy

Secrecy is not inherently immoral.

A dissident under dictatorship may need secrecy.

A worker organizing under a violently anti-union employer may need discretion.

A persecuted religious community may hide its meetings.

A journalist may protect a source.

A person escaping political persecution may conceal a route of flight.

The ethical question is not whether secrecy exists.

The question is what secrecy protects and what kind of power develops behind it.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes **protective secrecy** from **sovereign secrecy**.

Protective secrecy shields vulnerable people from unjust power.

Sovereign secrecy shields powerful institutions from accountability.

An underground movement can begin with the first and gradually develop the second.

At first, secrecy protects members.

Later, secrecy protects decisions from members.

Then secrecy protects leadership.

Then secrecy protects the organization's historical narrative.

The structure changes.

The justification remains security.

This pattern is not unique to revolutionary organizations.

States use national security in similar ways.

Corporations use confidentiality.

Religious institutions use internal discipline.

Political parties use closed decision-making.

Every institution is tempted to transform necessary privacy into immunity from accountability.

Moshe Reed Thought opposes institutional opacity wherever it becomes a shield for domination.

II. The Cell and the Fragmented World

Clandestine organizations often restrict information.

A member may know only what is necessary.

This can reduce the damage caused by arrest or infiltration.

But compartmentalization also changes political understanding.

The person sees one fragment.

Leadership sees another.

The organization as a whole becomes difficult for any ordinary member to evaluate.

Information inequality creates power inequality.

Those who possess broader knowledge can justify decisions by referring to facts others cannot verify.

The member is asked to trust.

Trust becomes loyalty.

Loyalty becomes discipline.

Discipline becomes identity.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies a fundamental principle:

Where information is permanently unequal, political power will tend to become unequal.

This is true in underground movements.

It is true in intelligence agencies.

It is true in corporations.

It is true in bureaucracies.

It is true in political parties.

The answer is not absolute transparency, which can be impossible or dangerous in certain circumstances.

The answer is limited secrecy combined with accountable structures.

But clandestine armed organizations face a structural problem: genuine public accountability can expose them.

Thus the very conditions of underground survival make democratic control difficult.

This contradiction cannot be solved through rhetoric.

An organization may describe itself as democratic while its operational structure remains necessarily hierarchical.

The tension is real.

III. The Psychology of Suspicion

The underground militant must learn suspicion.

Who is watching?

Who has been followed?

Who knows too much?

Who may be an informer?

Who has changed behavior?

Who can be trusted?

In an environment of surveillance and infiltration, such questions may be rational.

But habits of suspicion rarely remain confined to operational necessity.

They enter personality.

The world becomes divided into categories of trust.

The militant begins to interpret uncertainty as possible betrayal.

Criticism becomes ambiguous.

Is the critic simply disagreeing?

Or weakening morale?

Or spreading enemy narratives?

Or cooperating with authorities?

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the security interpretation of disagreement**.

Once disagreement is interpreted through security, political life becomes dangerous.

A healthy movement asks:

Is this criticism correct?

A closed organization asks:

Why is this person criticizing us?

The focus shifts from the content of speech to the loyalty of the speaker.

This is the beginning of ideological policing.

States do the same thing.

The government facing insurgency may treat civil-rights criticism as sympathy for militants.

Journalists become suspicious.

Lawyers become suspicious.

Families of prisoners become suspicious.

Entire communities become security categories.

Thus the psychology of suspicion develops on both sides.

The result is a society in which fewer people can speak freely.

IV. The Organization as Family

Clandestine organizations can create powerful bonds.

Members share risk.

They depend upon one another.

They possess secrets.

They experience fear together.

They may lose friends.

They may face prison.

They may live in exile.

Ordinary society may not understand their experiences.

The organization becomes family.

This solidarity can be deeply human.

It can produce courage, sacrifice, and mutual support.

But family-like loyalty can also weaken critical judgment.

A person may defend the organization because condemning an action feels like betraying friends.

The political and personal become inseparable.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes solidarity from moral surrender.

Loyalty to a friend does not require agreement with every action.

Love for a community does not require silence about wrongdoing.

Commitment to a cause does not require surrendering conscience.

A mature movement must allow members to say:

I remain committed to the people, but I believe the organization is wrong.

Closed movements make this distinction difficult.

The organization becomes identical with the cause.

To leave the organization appears to mean abandoning the people.

This is a powerful form of psychological control even when no explicit threat exists.

V. Exile and the Imagined Homeland

Exile changes political consciousness.

The person away from home may experience the homeland through memory.

Memory simplifies.

The homeland becomes concentrated.

The ordinary annoyances of daily life disappear.

The landscape becomes symbolic.

Language becomes sacred.

Political commitment can intensify because distance transforms place into ideal.

Moshe Reed Thought respects the pain of exile while recognizing its political danger.

The imagined homeland can become more pure than the real homeland.

The real population contains disagreement.

The imagined population is united.

The real society changes.

The remembered society remains fixed.

The real community may become tired of conflict.

The exile may interpret this exhaustion as weakness.

Distance can preserve commitment.

It can also preserve outdated assumptions.

This is one reason political movements must remain answerable to living communities rather than only to inherited narratives.

The homeland belongs to those living within it as well as those remembering it.

Neither group possesses exclusive moral ownership.

VI. The Border as Political Geography

Borders shape underground conflicts.

A state border can separate police jurisdictions.

It can create differences in law.

It can provide spaces of exile.

It can complicate pursuit.

It can transform neighboring territory into a political factor.

For Basque nationalism, the international boundary between Spain and France also intersected with the movement's broader conception of Euskal Herria.

The state saw an international border.

The nationalist imagination saw a divided homeland.

This difference in political geography mattered.

Moshe Reed Thought observes that maps are never entirely neutral.

A map produced by the state emphasizes jurisdiction.

A nationalist map emphasizes cultural territory.

An economic map emphasizes flows of labor and capital.

An ecological map emphasizes watersheds and landscapes.

A military map emphasizes strategic movement.

The same land can be represented through different forms of power.

The challenge is preventing any single map from becoming absolute.

Human beings live within overlapping geographies.

VII. Discipline and Obedience

An underground armed organization requires discipline.

Members cannot casually disclose information.

Decisions may have immediate consequences.

Operational failure can lead to arrest or death.

This reality creates strong arguments for hierarchy.

But hierarchy develops habits.

The member learns to follow instructions.

The leader learns to issue them.

The organization begins to value reliability above independent judgment.

Moshe Reed Thought does not romanticize spontaneity.

Complex action requires coordination.

But coordination and obedience are not identical.

A participatory institution coordinates through shared decision-making and delegated responsibility.

A command institution coordinates through hierarchy.

The more an organization depends upon violence and secrecy, the more difficult participatory structures become.

This produces the **organizational contradiction of armed liberation**:

The movement claims to seek popular freedom while developing internal structures that train a minority in command and the majority in support.

The contradiction becomes especially serious when the armed organization expects political authority after victory.

The habits of underground command can become habits of government.

History contains many examples of liberation movements that defeated old authorities only to reproduce centralized structures afterward.

The explanation is not always betrayal.

Sometimes the organization simply governs according to the only political habits it has practiced.

VIII. The Moral Distance of Categories

Violence becomes easier when the target is a category.

The human being becomes:

official,

police officer,

soldier,

informant,

capitalist,

collaborator,

traitor,

enemy.

Categories are necessary for political analysis.

But they become dangerous when they replace the individual entirely.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **categorical distance**.

The organization does not encounter a person.

It encounters a role.

The role is assigned guilt.

Individual complexity disappears.

This process occurs in states as well.

The detainee becomes a security threat.

The neighborhood becomes a hostile zone.

The political organization becomes a terrorist environment.

The family becomes an intelligence opportunity.

Categorical thinking makes institutional violence psychologically manageable.

The antidote is not the abandonment of analysis.

It is the restoration of individual moral reality.

Who is this person?

What did this person actually do?

What evidence exists?

What responsibility is individual rather than collective?

Without these questions, justice becomes category punishment.

IX. Financing the Hidden World

Every organization requires resources.

Printing requires money.

Travel requires money.

Housing requires money.

Legal defense requires money.

Prisoner support requires money.

Clandestine activity requires money.

The need for resources creates another moral threshold.

How are resources obtained?

Voluntary contribution builds one kind of relationship.

Coercive extraction builds another.

When an organization begins compelling financial support, the relationship between movement and community changes.

The organization no longer asks:

Do you support us?

It says:

You will support us.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies this as a transition from solidarity to taxation without consent.

The revolutionary organization begins performing a function of sovereignty.

It claims the right to extract resources.

But unlike a democratically accountable public institution, it does not receive this authority through transparent popular consent.

This contradiction would become increasingly important in the later history of ETA and will be examined directly in a later chapter.

The broader principle is already visible:

An organization can begin by challenging state authority and gradually begin imitating the functions of a state.

It gathers information.

It enforces discipline.

It extracts resources.

It punishes perceived betrayal.

It claims territorial legitimacy.

The revolutionary organization becomes a shadow sovereignty.

X. Prison and Organizational Identity

Prison changes movements.

Imprisoned members become symbols.

Campaigns develop around their treatment.

Families become politically involved.

The organization develops obligations toward prisoners.

Prison creates sacrifice.

Sacrifice creates moral authority.

The prisoner may become a symbol larger than the individual.

Moshe Reed Thought insists upon two simultaneous principles.

Prisoners retain human dignity.

Abuse, torture, and unlawful treatment are unacceptable regardless of the accusation.

At the same time, humane treatment of prisoners does not require political approval of the organization to which they belong.

This distinction is essential.

Human rights are universal precisely because they do not depend upon ideological agreement.

A democratic society must protect the rights of people accused or convicted of serious violence.

An armed organization must not use the existence of prisoners as a permanent justification for further violence.

Otherwise, prison becomes part of the self-reproducing conflict.

Violence produces prisoners.

Prisoners justify violence.

Violence produces more prisoners.

The cycle becomes institutional.

XI. The Closed Moral Community

As underground organizations become isolated, they can develop their own moral language.

Actions condemned outside the organization are praised inside it.

Words acquire specialized meanings.

Killing becomes execution.

Extortion becomes revolutionary taxation.

Intimidation becomes discipline.

Secrecy becomes commitment.

Doubt becomes weakness.

Criticism becomes collaboration.

Moshe Reed Thought warns that language can function as moral anesthesia.

Changing the name of an action does not change its effect upon the person experiencing it.

The victim of extortion experiences coercion regardless of the political theory attached to the demand.

The family of a murdered person experiences death regardless of the terminology used by the organization.

The detainee experiences abuse regardless of the security language used by the state.

Political language must constantly be returned to human experience.

What happened?

To whom?

Who decided?

What alternatives existed?

What consequences followed?

These questions break the closed moral vocabulary of institutions.

XII. Leaving the Organization

A free political movement must permit departure.

This principle sounds simple.

In closed organizations, leaving can become psychologically and politically difficult.

The departing member possesses knowledge.

The organization may fear disclosure.

Friends remain inside.

Years of identity may be invested in the struggle.

The person may feel guilt.

Leaving may be interpreted as betrayal.

The outside world may be hostile.

Moshe Reed Thought treats the right to leave as one of the most important measures of freedom.

Can a person leave the party?

The church?

The political movement?

The military organization?

The workplace?

The relationship?

The state?

Every institution reveals its character in the conditions it places upon exit.

An institution that claims permanent ownership of the individual has crossed into domination.

Political commitment must remain commitment.

It must not become possession.

XIII. The Organization Becomes More Real Than Society

The deepest danger of clandestinity is not secrecy itself.

It is inversion.

The organization begins as an instrument serving society.

Over time, society becomes the environment serving the organization.

The community provides recruits.

The community provides money.

The community provides silence.

The community provides safe social space.

The community provides political legitimacy.

The organization begins to interpret the health of the struggle as identical to the health of the people.

If the organization is strong, the people are advancing.

If the organization is weak, the people are defeated.

This is substitutionism in its mature form.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects it completely.

A people can flourish while an armed organization declines.

A people can suffer while an armed organization grows.

Organizational strength and human liberation are not identical.

The purpose of politics is not to make organizations powerful.

It is to make people capable.

XIV. The Underground Mirror of the State

There is a final paradox.

The revolutionary organization opposes the state.

Yet prolonged conflict can make it resemble a miniature version of the state.

The state surveils.

The underground organization gathers intelligence.

The state taxes.

The underground organization extracts resources.

The state punishes.

The underground organization disciplines.

The state claims territorial legitimacy.

The underground organization claims revolutionary sovereignty.

The state classifies enemies.

The underground organization classifies traitors.

The forms are not identical in scale or law.

But the structural resemblance matters.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this the **mirror of sovereignty**.

The danger is that a movement may become what it fights before it ever defeats what it fights.

Liberation therefore requires more than changing who commands.

It requires changing the relationship between authority and human life.

XV. Toward the First Blood

The underground world created the organizational conditions for escalation.

Secrecy made clandestine action possible.

Discipline made coordinated action possible.

Ideology made action meaningful.

Repression made action appear necessary.

Group loyalty made sacrifice possible.

Categories created moral distance.

The theory of action and reaction promised that confrontation would awaken society.

But theory eventually encounters flesh.

There comes a moment when political violence ceases to be hypothetical.

Someone dies.

The organization changes.

The state changes.

The public changes.

The family of the dead changes forever.

The first death does not remain alone.

It becomes precedent.

Memory.

Justification.

Warning.

Symbol.

Chapter 9

The First Blood

There is a difference between imagining political violence and living after it.

Before the first death, killing exists in theory.

It appears in books, speeches, private conversations, revolutionary histories, strategic arguments, and moral justifications.

The enemy is abstract.

The revolution is abstract.

The victim is abstract.

Then someone dies.

Afterward, nothing is entirely theoretical.

There is a body.

There is a family.

There is an investigation.

There are photographs.

There are funerals.

There are statements.

There are accusations.

There are supporters who celebrate.

There are opponents who demand retaliation.

There are frightened people who say nothing.

The organization itself changes.

It has crossed a threshold.

The state changes as well.

Security institutions reorganize.

Surveillance expands.

Police pressure intensifies.

New laws or practices may be justified.

The political environment becomes harder.

The first blood does not remain only an event.

It becomes a precedent.

For Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, the transition into lethal violence marked a decisive transformation. The organization that had emerged from youth activism, cultural resistance, radical nationalism, and revolutionary theory entered a new political reality.

The gun had ceased to be symbolic.

From the perspective of Moshe Reed Thought, this moment raises the most difficult question of revolutionary politics:

What happens to a movement when it acquires the power to kill, and what happens to society when killing becomes part of political communication?

I. The Threshold of Killing

Human beings possess a remarkable ability to justify actions before performing them.

Theory prepares the mind.

The target becomes an enemy.

The enemy becomes a representative of a system.

The system becomes responsible for oppression.

The person is then understood primarily through the system.

The final step appears logical:

To strike the person is to strike the system.

But a system is not killed when a person dies.

The system remains.

The person does not.

This is the first contradiction of political assassination.

The revolutionary may intend to attack an institution.

The actual victim is a human being.

Moshe Reed Thought does not deny that individuals can bear responsibility for serious wrongdoing.

Nor does it claim that force is never justified under any circumstances.

But it insists that political categories cannot erase individual moral reality.

The question must always return:

What did this specific person do?

What immediate threat existed?

What alternatives were available?

Who possessed authority to judge?

What process established guilt?

What consequences would follow?

An underground organization that appoints itself investigator, judge, and executioner concentrates extraordinary power.

The state can also abuse these functions.

The answer to abusive state power is not automatically unaccountable counter-power.

Justice requires accountability.

II. From Symbolic Resistance to Irreversible Action

A demonstration ends.

A leaflet can be withdrawn.

A speech can be corrected.

A political organization can change its program.

Death cannot be revised.

This is why lethal violence possesses a different moral character from ordinary political action.

It is irreversible.

The dead cannot participate in later reconciliation.

They cannot hear an apology.

They cannot accept compensation.

They cannot explain themselves.

They cannot change.

They cannot forgive.

Political movements often speak as though history will judge their actions.

But history cannot resurrect anyone.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore places **irreversibility** at the center of political ethics.

The more irreversible an action, the greater the burden of justification.

This principle applies to revolutionary organizations.

It applies to states.

It applies to courts.

It applies to armies.

Power over life demands the highest possible accountability.

Clandestine organizations, by their nature, struggle to provide such accountability.

Their decisions are hidden.

Their evidence may be hidden.

Their internal deliberations are hidden.

Their decision-makers may be unknown.

Yet the consequence is permanent.

This imbalance between hidden decision and irreversible consequence is one of the central moral problems of underground political violence.

III. The Creation of the Enemy

Killing requires psychological preparation.

The target must become killable.

This usually occurs through categories.

The person is no longer primarily a person.

The person becomes:

the police,

the military,

the regime,

the collaborator,

the traitor,

the exploiter,

the occupier,

the enemy.

Categories can describe real political roles.

But when the category consumes the entire person, moral distance grows.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **enemy abstraction**.

Enemy abstraction allows the organization to interpret the death of a person as the removal of a political function.

But families do not mourn functions.

They mourn people.

The state also uses enemy abstraction.

The militant becomes terrorist.

The prisoner becomes threat.

The dissident becomes subversive.

The community becomes a security environment.

Once categories replace people, collective punishment becomes easier.

Thus, both state repression and revolutionary violence can depend upon the same psychological mechanism.

The categories differ.

The disappearance of the person is the same.

IV. The Revolutionary Justification

Political violence is rarely committed without explanation.

The organization creates a narrative.

The action was necessary.

The target was responsible.

The state left no alternative.

The people demanded resistance.

History required action.

The enemy understands only force.

Moshe Reed Thought examines every such justification through three tests.

First: **necessity**.

Was lethal violence truly necessary to prevent immediate harm, or was it chosen as political strategy?

Second: **accountability**.

Who made the decision, and to whom were they answerable?

Third: **human consequence**.

What happened not in theory, but to actual people?

These tests prevent ideology from replacing judgment.

A movement cannot simply announce that its cause is just and therefore every action taken in pursuit of the cause is justified.

A just grievance does not create unlimited moral permission.

This is one of the foundational principles of Moshe Reed Thought.

V. The State Responds

Political killing does not occur in a vacuum.

The state responds.

Investigations intensify.

Police operations expand.

Arrests increase.

Surveillance grows.

Security institutions demand greater authority.

The public may support stronger measures.

This is where the theory of action and reaction enters practice.

The organization expects repression.

The state response may then be interpreted as proof that the original action was necessary.

The cycle becomes circular.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects circular justification.

The armed organization cannot justify every attack by pointing to the repression that followed previous attacks.

The state cannot justify every abuse by pointing to the violence that followed previous abuses.

Each action must be judged individually and structurally.

Responsibility does not disappear inside a cycle.

The cycle is made from decisions.

VI. The First Martyrs

Conflict creates competing martyr traditions.

A militant killed by security forces becomes a symbol for supporters.

A police officer killed by militants becomes a symbol for the state and for the officer's community.

A civilian victim becomes a symbol of innocence.

Symbols mobilize.

But symbols can also imprison.

The dead are recruited into political arguments.

The movement says:

Continue because they died.

The state says:

Intensify because they died.

The family may simply want the person back.

Moshe Reed Thought refuses to let organizations own the dead.

The dead belong first to the reality of their own lives.

They should not become permanent political property.

Memory should ask what can prevent repetition.

Mythology asks how death can justify continuation.

This difference determines whether mourning becomes wisdom or fuel.

VII. Retaliation and the Expanding Circle

Once killing enters political conflict, the circle of possible targets can expand.

The first target may be defined narrowly.

Then another category is added.

Officials.

Security personnel.

Political figures.

Judges.

Businesspeople.

Journalists.

Alleged informers.

Political opponents.

The boundaries of the enemy category can grow.

This process occurs because organizations require explanations for continued struggle.

The enemy becomes a system.

Anyone perceived as sustaining the system can become part of the enemy environment.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies this as **target expansion through structural guilt**.

Structural analysis can explain how institutions function.

But guilt must remain individual.

A person can participate in an unjust structure without bearing equal responsibility for every action of that structure.

Without this distinction, entire populations can become legitimate targets through association.

The history of political violence repeatedly demonstrates the danger.

VIII. The Family Enters History

Political histories often describe organizations and states.

But violence enters history through families.

A knock on the door.

A telephone call.

A body identified.

A funeral arranged.

A child told that a parent will not return.

A parent told that a child has died.

A spouse left alone.

A chair remaining empty.

The family becomes political even if it never wanted politics.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that every history of revolutionary violence must descend from ideology into the household.

The household is where the abstraction ends.

A political theory may say that one death advances the struggle.

The household experiences permanent absence.

This is why the empty chair remains a central image within the Moshe Reed framework.

The empty chair is the final critic of political abstraction.

IX. Fear and Silence

After political killing begins, silence changes meaning.

Some remain silent because they support the organization.

Some because they oppose it.

Some because they fear the state.

Some because they fear militants.

Some because they are exhausted.

Some because they do not know what to think.

Some because they want to protect their families.

Organizations often interpret silence according to their preferred narrative.

The state says silence means loyalty.

The militant movement says silence means hidden support.

Moshe Reed Thought says:

Silence must not be interpreted as consent where fear exists.

This principle is essential to democratic legitimacy.

Support must be freely expressible.

Opposition must also be freely expressible.

A political movement that cannot tolerate visible disagreement cannot know whether it truly possesses support.

Fear destroys political knowledge.

X. Violence and Masculine Mythology

Armed movements often develop heroic images of the militant.

Courage.

Discipline.

Sacrifice.

Endurance.

Defiance.

These qualities can be real.

But they can become part of a mythology in which violence itself proves seriousness.

The person willing to kill is considered committed.

The person calling for caution is considered weak.

The negotiator is considered compromised.

The doubter is considered cowardly.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the identification of courage with aggression.

Restraint can require courage.

Admitting strategic failure can require courage.

Facing one's own supporters with an unpopular truth can require courage.

Ending a cycle of retaliation can require courage.

The warrior mythology of politics often understands only one kind of bravery.

A mature society must recognize others.

XI. The Organization After Killing

An organization changes after it kills.

Members now share more than ideas.

They share responsibility.

Secrets deepen.

Loyalty becomes more intense.

The state response increases pressure.

The organization must protect participants.

This strengthens clandestinity.

Killing therefore creates organizational consequences that encourage further separation from society.

The organization becomes more secretive because it has more to hide.

It becomes more disciplined because mistakes become more dangerous.

It becomes more suspicious because infiltration becomes more threatening.

It becomes more dependent upon trusted networks.

Thus violence does not merely express organizational ideology.

Violence restructures the organization.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the institutional feedback of violence**.

Methods reshape institutions.

Institutions then generate new methods.

The cycle becomes self-reinforcing.

XII. Can Violence Liberate?

The question cannot be answered through slogans.

There are historical situations in which people have defended themselves against invasion, extermination, slavery, or immediate violent attack.

Moshe Reed Thought does not preach absolute passivity before direct aggression.

But it distinguishes defense from the ideology of violence.

Defense seeks to protect life.

The ideology of violence begins to treat violence as historically creative.

Defense seeks an end to danger.

The ideology of violence can become dependent upon continued confrontation.

Defense remains accountable to what is being protected.

The ideology of violence makes the struggle itself sacred.

This distinction is essential.

The question is not whether force has ever played a role in history.

Of course it has.

The question is whether an organization can use force without becoming organized around force.

This is much more difficult.

XIII. The Blood Debt

Once people die, movements develop the language of debt.

We owe it to the dead to continue.

Their sacrifice must not be wasted.

Victory will give meaning to their deaths.

This language is emotionally powerful.

It is also dangerous.

The dead cannot demand new deaths.

The living speak for them.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the blood debt.

No person killed in the past creates an obligation to kill in the future.

The living possess an obligation to remember.

To investigate.

To seek justice.

To prevent repetition.

But remembrance does not require continuation of the cycle that produced the death.

A society becomes free when the dead are allowed to rest rather than being repeatedly mobilized.

XIV. The Point of No Return Is a Myth

Armed movements often believe they have crossed a point of no return.

Too much has happened.

Too many have died.

Too many are imprisoned.

Too many sacrifices have been made.

Therefore the struggle must continue.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this logic.

There is always a moral possibility of change.

The past cannot be reversed.

The future can still be altered.

Continuing a harmful strategy does not honor previous sacrifice.

It adds new sacrifice.

The refusal to change because of sunk costs is not loyalty.

It is institutional captivity.

This principle applies to movements.

It applies to states.

A government can also continue failed repression because admitting failure appears politically costly.

Thus both sides can become prisoners of previous decisions.

XV. The Beginning of the Long Conflict

The first blood did not settle the Basque question.

It did not eliminate dictatorship.

It did not resolve the relationship between nationalism and socialism.

It did not determine the political future of the Basque people.

What it did was change the structure of the conflict.

Violence had become part of political language.

The state would respond.

The organization would adapt.

Prisons would fill.

Martyr narratives would develop.

Repression would produce anger.

Attacks would produce fear.

Each side would increasingly interpret the actions of the other as confirmation of its own worldview.

The closed dialectic of enemies had begun.

But history was about to change again.

The dictatorship would not last forever.

The political environment in which ETA had developed would be transformed.

The central question would become more difficult.

What happens to an armed revolutionary organization when the dictatorship against which it defined itself begins to disappear?

Can methods formed under authoritarian conditions survive democratic transition without becoming contradictions?

Can the gun recognize when history has changed?

Chapter 10

ETA Under Franco

An armed movement formed under dictatorship develops inside a particular moral and political atmosphere.

The state does not permit ordinary democratic competition.

Opposition organizations are restricted or suppressed.

Public criticism can bring consequences.

Police power is difficult to challenge.

Prison becomes part of political life.

Exile becomes part of political geography.

Censorship changes how information moves.

Fear changes how people speak.

Under such conditions, clandestine organization can acquire a moral authority that would be more difficult to claim within an open political system.

The militant says:

There is no ballot capable of changing this government.

There is no ordinary election through which power can be peacefully transferred.

There is no free political arena in which the national question can be openly resolved.

The state has closed peaceful political space.

Therefore, resistance must take another form.

This argument possessed power within the world of Francoist dictatorship.

But even under dictatorship, the existence of injustice did not make every form of resistance morally identical.

Cultural preservation was resistance.

Underground publishing was resistance.

Labor organization was resistance.

Political education was resistance.

International advocacy was resistance.

Civil disobedience was resistance.

Sabotage was resistance.

Armed attacks were resistance.

Assassination was resistance.

Yet these methods differed profoundly in their consequences.

Moshe Reed Thought insists upon a distinction that remains central throughout this book:

The legitimacy of resisting oppression does not eliminate the responsibility to judge the methods of resistance.

At the same time, the methods of ETA cannot be understood without examining the political environment in which they developed.

The organization existed under a dictatorship.

This fact is neither a complete justification nor an irrelevant detail.

It is history.

I. The Dictatorship as Political Environment

The dictatorship of Francisco Franco lasted for decades.

For those born after the Spanish Civil War, authoritarian government could appear permanent.

A young activist did not possess personal memory of competitive national elections leading to peaceful changes of central power.

The regime was simply the political world.

This matters psychologically.

People interpret possibility through experience.

If every remembered political year contains the same authoritarian structure, gradual change can appear imaginary.

The revolutionary message becomes attractive because it promises rupture.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the politics of blocked possibility**.

When people cannot imagine institutional change, they become more willing to imagine catastrophic change.

This is one reason authoritarian systems create their own revolutionary enemies.

By preventing reform, they strengthen the argument for rupture.

By closing legal opposition, they strengthen clandestine organization.

By treating moderate and radical opposition as equally illegitimate, they weaken the incentive for moderation.

A state that destroys peaceful alternatives may discover that it has trained its opponents to believe only in force.

This does not absolve those opponents of responsibility for later choices.

But it explains the environment in which those choices acquired meaning.

II. Cultural Repression and Political Identity

Under centralized authoritarian nationalism, cultural questions become security questions.

Language becomes loyalty.

Regional identity becomes suspicion.

Historical memory becomes political.

Symbols become dangerous.

The state may believe it is creating unity.

Instead, it can create resistance identities.

The person who might once have spoken a language without political consciousness begins to understand language as opposition.

The person who might have held layered identities begins to feel forced to choose.

The state says:

You must belong in this way.

The individual replies:

Then I will define myself against you.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies this as **identity through coercive opposition**.

A centralized state can strengthen the identity it seeks to weaken by giving that identity an enemy.

This is one of the paradoxes of assimilation.

Pressure can produce conformity.

It can also produce revival.

The result depends upon social conditions, institutions, memory, and resistance networks.

For ETA, cultural survival and political liberation became increasingly inseparable.

But Moshe Reed Thought warns against another transformation.

An identity formed in resistance can become dependent upon resistance.

If the external pressure changes, the identity may struggle to imagine itself outside conflict.

Culture must eventually become more than opposition.

A language must be spoken because it is loved, not only because speaking it defies someone.

A homeland must be built as a place to live, not merely defended as a territory of struggle.

III. The Moral Authority of Anti-Dictatorial Resistance

Resistance to dictatorship can create genuine moral authority.

People who risk imprisonment or death to oppose authoritarian power may demonstrate extraordinary courage.

But moral authority is dangerous when it becomes permanent credit.

A movement may begin to believe:

Because we resisted dictatorship, our later actions cannot be judged by ordinary standards.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects accumulated moral immunity.

There is no permanent account of virtue from which future wrongdoing can be paid.

Each action creates responsibility.

A movement can be courageous in one period and destructive in another.

A government can perform legitimate functions and still commit abuses.

A political prisoner can deserve humane treatment regardless of whether the prisoner's ideology is correct.

A victim can later become a perpetrator.

A perpetrator can later change.

Human beings remain morally dynamic.

This principle becomes crucial when the dictatorship ends.

The moral authority acquired through resistance to Francoism could not automatically justify continued violence under transformed political conditions.

History changed.

The organization would have to decide whether it could change with history.

IV. Repression and the Production of Militancy

Repression can create militants.

Not mechanically.

Not universally.

But often enough that governments should understand the danger.

A person is arrested.

A family becomes politicized.

A prisoner returns with stronger convictions.

A story of abuse circulates.

A community develops anger.

A funeral becomes a political event.

A symbol is created.

The state sees one militant removed.

The movement sees ten possible recruits.

Moshe Reed Thought does not romanticize this process.

Radicalization is not automatically enlightenment.

Anger can produce courage.

It can also produce hatred.

Suffering can produce solidarity.

It can also produce a desire for vengeance.

The political question is what institutions transform anger into action.

A cooperative movement transforms anger into construction.

A democratic movement transforms anger into participation.

An armed organization transforms anger into recruitment for confrontation.

The same grievance can enter different institutional pathways.

Structures matter.

V. Prison as a Political School

Prison can isolate individuals.

It can also connect them.

Political prisoners meet others.

They exchange ideas.

They interpret their experiences collectively.

Prison becomes a school.

The state intends punishment.

The movement receives trained activists.

This paradox appears across political history.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore argues that prison policy must be judged not only through punishment but through human dignity and social consequence.

Abuse in prison does not strengthen legitimate authority.

It corrodes it.

Humiliation produces memory.

Torture produces memory.

Arbitrary treatment produces memory.

These memories leave the prison.

Families inherit them.

Communities discuss them.

Movements organize around them.

But prison also becomes part of organizational mythology.

The prisoner is transformed into a symbol.

The individual story becomes part of the movement's narrative.

This can create solidarity.

It can also create political pressure to continue a conflict indefinitely.

The prisoner becomes one more reason why the struggle cannot end.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this logic.

Prisoners must be treated humanely.

Their rights must be defended.

But the existence of prisoners cannot become a moral demand for endless new violence that creates more prisoners.

VI. Torture and the Destruction of Legitimacy

Torture is not merely an abuse of power.

It is the destruction of law by those claiming to defend law.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects torture without qualification.

The person in custody is already under institutional control.

The use of physical or psychological torment transforms the security institution into an instrument of domination.

The strategic consequences are also profound.

Stories of torture spread.

Some are documented.

Some are disputed.

Some become exaggerated through political networks.

But where credible abuse exists, denial compounds the damage.

The state loses trust.

The movement gains narrative power.

The abused person may become radicalized.

Families become politically active.

Communities develop fear and hatred toward institutions.

A democratic order cannot be built upon secret cruelty.

Nor can an authoritarian order torture its way into genuine legitimacy.

Force can produce information.

It can also produce false information.

It can produce obedience.

It cannot produce trust.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that institutions must be judged most severely where individuals are most powerless.

The prisoner.

The detainee.

The child.

The patient.

The worker facing concentrated economic power.

The citizen facing secret security institutions.

The moral character of a society is revealed where power is most unequal.

VII. The Spectacle of Resistance

Armed resistance creates images.

The hidden militant.

The fugitive.

The prisoner.

The martyr.

The funeral procession.

The clandestine symbol.

The forbidden slogan.

These images can become more politically powerful than complex programs.

The militant becomes a figure of defiance.

For young people living under authoritarian conditions, this figure can possess extraordinary appeal.

Moshe Reed Thought understands the emotional power of resistance mythology.

But mythology simplifies.

The militant is shown at the moment of courage.

Not during doubt.

Not during error.

Not when an operation harms someone unintended.

Not when internal disagreements emerge.

Not when the organization demands obedience.

The state creates its own mythology.

The officer becomes defender of order.

The soldier becomes guardian of unity.

The institution becomes civilization.

Abuses disappear from the image.

Thus two mythologies confront one another.

The heroic militant.

The heroic state.

The human beings disappear between them.

VIII. International Revolutionary Imagination

ETA existed within an international century of revolution.

Movements across the world challenged colonial governments, authoritarian regimes, and capitalist structures.

Revolutionary literature circulated.

Images of guerrilla struggle became global symbols.

Small organizations imagined that disciplined commitment could defeat materially stronger states.

This international environment mattered.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the globalization of revolutionary imagination**.

Political ideas travel faster than social conditions.

A theory developed in one country can inspire militants in another.

A revolutionary figure from a distant society becomes a universal symbol.

But strategies are embedded in conditions.

Terrain differs.

Political legitimacy differs.

Class structures differ.

International relationships differ.

State institutions differ.

Public opinion differs.

The danger comes when inspiration becomes imitation.

The revolutionary sees history as a collection of heroic examples rather than a field requiring specific analysis.

Moshe Reed Thought accepts international learning.

It rejects strategic copying.

IX. Violence Under Dictatorship

The moral evaluation of violence under dictatorship is difficult because legal political alternatives may be severely constrained.

Moshe Reed Thought approaches the question through a hierarchy of resistance.

The first obligation is preservation of life and community.

The second is expansion of human capacity for self-government.

The third is reduction of domination.

Methods should be judged according to whether they advance these purposes.

Cultural preservation strengthens community.

Political education strengthens capacity.

Worker organization strengthens collective power.

Mutual aid strengthens solidarity.

Nonviolent resistance can expose illegitimacy while expanding participation.

Defensive force may become legitimate where immediate life faces direct violent attack.

But assassination as political strategy introduces a different logic.

It creates secret authority over life.

It creates retaliation.

It strengthens clandestine hierarchy.

It may reduce mass participation by transferring political agency from communities to specialists in violence.

The central Moshe Reed question is therefore:

Does the method make the people more capable of governing themselves?

Or does it make the organization more capable of acting for them?

This distinction separates popular liberation from substitutionism.

X. The Assassination of Authority

Political assassination carries symbolic logic.

The target represents the system.

Removing the target demonstrates vulnerability.

The act communicates that authority is not untouchable.

But systems are resilient.

Individuals can be replaced.

Institutions adapt.

Security measures expand.

The symbolic victory may produce strategic consequences opposite to those intended.

Moshe Reed Thought does not reduce politics to morality alone.

It also demands strategic realism.

Did the action weaken domination?

Did it strengthen security institutions?

Did it expand public support?

Did it isolate the movement?

Did it create a cycle of retaliation?

Did it transform the organization into something increasingly dependent upon violence?

A strategy cannot be defended forever by its symbolic meaning.

Consequences matter.

XI. The Franco Regime as ETA's Necessary Enemy

Organizations define themselves through enemies.

For ETA, the dictatorship provided an obvious enemy structure.

Authoritarian rule.

Centralization.

Repression.

Restrictions upon political activity.

The enemy gave the movement coherence.

But what happens when the enemy disappears?

This question was already hidden inside the organization's development.

A movement built against one political order must eventually decide whether its purpose extends beyond that order.

If the goal is simply ending dictatorship, democratization changes the mission.

If the goal is independence, democratization changes conditions but not the final objective.

If the goal is socialist revolution, democratization may be interpreted as a new form of capitalist domination.

Thus organizations can survive political transition by redefining the enemy.

The dictatorship becomes the post-dictatorial state.

The authoritarian police institution becomes the democratic security institution.

The revolutionary theory adapts.

Sometimes this adaptation reflects real continuity.

Old institutions do not disappear overnight.

Personnel, habits, and structures may survive political transitions.

But sometimes the theory becomes incapable of recognizing genuine change.

Moshe Reed Thought insists upon historical discrimination.

Continuity must be identified.

Change must also be identified.

If every state is treated as identical, political analysis becomes theology.

XII. The Coming Transition

By the later years of Franco's rule, the question of succession became unavoidable.

No dictator is immortal.

Authoritarian systems often appear permanent until suddenly they are not.

The death of a ruler can open political space.

It can also create instability.

Opposition movements prepare.

State institutions adapt.

Moderates negotiate.

Radicals fear betrayal.

Revolutionaries may interpret reform as an attempt to save the system.

The population may desire change without revolution.

This is one of the most difficult moments for armed movements.

The political environment becomes ambiguous.

Under clear dictatorship, the enemy is obvious.

During transition, categories blur.

Negotiation becomes possible.

Legal political activity expands.

Elections may return.

Institutions may change unevenly.

Some old structures remain.

New structures emerge.

The revolutionary organization must decide whether transition is real or deceptive.

If it chooses incorrectly, the consequences can last decades.

XIII. The Inheritance of Armed Identity

By the time the dictatorship approached its end, ETA was no longer merely a group of dissatisfied youth.

It possessed history.

Members had died.

Members had been imprisoned.

Members had lived in exile.

Operations had been conducted.

Internal debates had occurred.

The organization had split and evolved.

A broader political environment had developed around radical nationalism.

The armed struggle had become part of identity.

This is crucial.

A movement can change goals more easily than identity.

A political statement can be rewritten.

An identity is lived.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **institutional memory embodied**.

The organization remembers through its members.

The prisoner embodies sacrifice.

The dead militant embodies commitment.

The veteran embodies continuity.

The symbol embodies history.

To abandon armed struggle can therefore feel like abandoning the meaning of one's own life.

This psychological reality does not justify continued violence.

But it helps explain why organizations often continue beyond strategic usefulness.

XIV. When History Changes Faster Than Organizations

Political institutions possess inertia.

The world changes.

The organization interprets change through categories developed earlier.

This is true of states.

It is true of parties.

It is true of revolutionary movements.

The Franco dictatorship had shaped ETA.

The question was whether ETA could survive the disappearance of Francoism without carrying the logic of dictatorship permanently within its own worldview.

Could legal political struggle become meaningful?

Could elections matter?

Could regional autonomy alter the national question?

Could the movement accept that Basque society itself was divided about methods and goals?

Could armed struggle be abandoned without interpreting abandonment as surrender?

These questions would define the next era.

Moshe Reed Thought sees the transition as the decisive test of revolutionary maturity.

A movement genuinely committed to liberation must be capable of recognizing when new political possibilities appear.

A movement committed primarily to its own identity will interpret every new possibility as a threat.

XV. The Dictator Dies, the Question Remains

Franco died in 1975.

The dictatorship did not simply vanish in a single instant.

Political transitions are processes.

Institutions change unevenly.

Old habits survive.

New possibilities emerge gradually.

Negotiation and conflict coexist.

But the historical environment had changed fundamentally.

Spain entered a democratic transition.

Political participation expanded.

Elections returned.

A new constitutional order emerged.

Regional autonomy developed.

The Basque political landscape changed.

Yet ETA continued armed activity.

This continuation would become one of the central questions of its history.

Why did an organization formed under dictatorship continue after dictatorship?

Its answer was that the underlying conflict remained unresolved.

The Basque homeland was still divided.

Independence had not been achieved.

The political and economic system remained unacceptable from its revolutionary perspective.

State institutions still contained continuities and abuses.

The revolution remained unfinished.

But Moshe Reed Thought asks another question:

When political conditions change, what responsibility does a revolutionary organization have to reconsider methods created under earlier conditions?

If the ballot appears, can the bullet continue to claim necessity?

If public organizing becomes possible, can clandestine violence still claim to be the only serious form of politics?

If the people can speak, can an armed organization continue claiming to speak for them?

Chapter 11

The Death of Franco and the Crisis of Revolutionary Purpose

Dictatorships teach their enemies to think in permanent categories.

The regime appears permanent.

The police are the regime.

The courts are the regime.

The flag is the regime.

The constitution, where one exists, is the regime.

The opposition learns to interpret political life through a simple division:

dictatorship and resistance.

Then history changes.

The dictator dies.

Institutions begin to transform.

Political parties emerge from illegality.

Exiles return.

Elections become possible.

Negotiations begin.

New constitutional arrangements are proposed.

Regional autonomy becomes a subject of institutional construction rather than merely clandestine aspiration.

The old categories no longer explain everything.

For a democratic movement, this transformation creates opportunity.

For an armed revolutionary organization, it creates a crisis.

If the organization justified violence through the impossibility of legal political action, what happens when legal political action becomes possible?

If the organization claimed to act because the people had no voice, what happens when the people can vote?

If the movement defined itself through resistance to dictatorship, what happens when dictatorship gives way to an imperfect but meaningful process of democratization?

These questions confronted Euskadi Ta Askatasuna after the death of Francisco Franco in 1975.

ETA did not disappear.

Its armed campaign continued.

Indeed, some of the most violent years associated with the organization occurred after the dictatorship had ended and during the period of democratic consolidation.

This historical fact demands explanation.

The explanation cannot be reduced to one sentence.

ETA's goals extended beyond opposition to Franco personally. The organization sought Basque independence and, within major currents of its ideological development, revolutionary socialist transformation. From this perspective, democratic reform did not resolve the underlying national and social questions.

There were also genuine continuities, unresolved grievances, disputes over prisoners, controversies surrounding security practices, and profound mistrust.

But Moshe Reed Thought insists upon the central issue:

When history creates new possibilities, a liberation movement has a responsibility to test those possibilities before continuing methods built for a different political world.

The crisis of revolutionary purpose begins when the organization needs the old world to remain conceptually alive after the world itself has changed.

I. The Death of a Dictator Is Not the Death of a System

Political transitions are never instantaneous.

A dictator dies on a particular date.

Institutions change over years.

Personnel remain.

Habits remain.

Police cultures remain.

Judicial structures remain.

Economic power remains.

Social fear remains.

Political memory remains.

Therefore, revolutionary suspicion toward transition is not automatically irrational.

A movement may ask:

Is this democracy genuine?

Are the old elites simply reorganizing?

Will the military accept change?

Will political freedoms survive?

Will regional autonomy be meaningful?

Will prisoners be released?

Will security institutions remain abusive?

These are legitimate questions.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the mythology of instant democratization.

A constitution does not magically transform every institution.

An election does not erase historical trauma.

A new government does not automatically produce public trust.

But the opposite error is equally dangerous.

Because continuity exists, the revolutionary may deny all change.

Because some institutions remain, every institution is treated as identical to the dictatorship.

Because democracy is imperfect, democracy is declared meaningless.

Because capitalism remains, political freedom is dismissed as illusion.

This is analytical laziness disguised as radicalism.

Moshe Reed Thought requires discrimination.

What changed?

What remained?

What new political possibilities exist?

What barriers continue?

Which methods are now justified?

Which methods are no longer justified?

Revolutionary seriousness requires answering these questions honestly.

II. The Problem of Institutional Momentum

Organizations do not exist only through ideology.

They possess structures.

Members.

Leadership.

Resources.

Prisoners.

Support networks.

Symbols.

Publications.

Rituals.

Martyrs.

Historical narratives.

An armed organization also possesses clandestine capabilities and an internal culture built around risk.

When the political environment changes, these structures do not automatically disappear.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **institutional momentum**.

Institutional momentum occurs when an organization continues partly because continuation has become normal.

Members know how to struggle.

They may not know how to transform.

Leadership has authority within the existing structure.

Transformation may threaten that authority.

Supporters have built identities around the organization.

Ending the struggle may feel like admitting that sacrifices were unnecessary.

The organization therefore interprets new conditions through concepts that preserve organizational purpose.

This is not always conscious manipulation.

Institutions think through their own survival.

A bureaucracy sees problems requiring administration.

A military sees security threats.

A corporation sees markets.

A revolutionary organization sees contradictions requiring struggle.

The institution's form shapes what it can perceive.

III. The Ballot and the Bullet

The arrival of elections creates a fundamental challenge to armed vanguardism.

The organization claims to represent the people.

The election allows people to express political preferences.

What happens when the results are complex?

What happens when nationalist parties gain support but the armed organization's strategy does not receive universal approval?

What happens when the population supports autonomy rather than immediate revolutionary transformation?

The vanguard faces a choice.

It can accept political plurality.

Or it can claim that elections do not express true consciousness.

The second path is common.

The revolutionary says:

The media manipulate the population.

Capital controls politics.

The constitution limits real choice.

The people have not yet developed revolutionary consciousness.

Fear distorts the vote.

The system defines acceptable options.

Some of these criticisms can contain truth.

Liberal democracy is not free from concentrated wealth, media power, institutional inequality, or structural limits.

But Moshe Reed Thought asks:

What follows?

The existence of imperfection does not authorize an armed minority to override political participation.

The answer to insufficient democracy is deeper democracy.

Worker institutions.

Cooperatives.

Municipal participation.

Public media pluralism.

Campaign reform.

Regional autonomy.

Popular assemblies.

Union organization.

Political education.

The answer is not substitution of the gun for the vote.

The ballot is not sufficient.

The bullet is not democratic.

IV. The Transition as Betrayal

Revolutionary organizations often interpret negotiated transitions as betrayal.

Moderates compromise.

Former enemies enter dialogue.

Prisoners may be released selectively.

Political parties accept constitutional limits.

The old order changes without being completely destroyed.

To the revolutionary, this can appear intolerable.

The revolution promised purification.

Transition produces ambiguity.

The revolution promised rupture.

Transition produces continuity and change together.

The revolution promised victory.

Transition produces compromise.

Moshe Reed Thought prefers imperfect participation to pure abstraction.

Politics among actual human beings requires negotiation.

No society contains one will.

No nation contains one ideology.

No class contains one consciousness.

Compromise is not always justice.

But refusal to compromise can also become refusal to recognize that other people exist.

A democratic society is built partly from the permanent fact that no political faction receives everything it desires.

The revolutionary organization struggles with this reality because it interprets its program as historically necessary rather than politically contestable.

V. The Constitution and the National Question

A new constitutional order can transform political conditions without resolving every national dispute.

This is precisely what makes democratic politics difficult.

The Basque national question did not disappear because Spain democratized.

Questions of sovereignty, autonomy, identity, language, territory, and political association remained.

Different Basque political movements offered different answers.

Some participated in institutions.

Some pursued greater autonomy.

Some sought independence through political means.

The continued existence of the national question did not prove that armed struggle remained necessary.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes between **unresolved conflict** and **closed political space**.

A conflict can remain unresolved while peaceful political mechanisms exist for organizing, persuading, voting, negotiating, protesting, and building institutions.

The existence of disagreement is not proof of dictatorship.

Democracy is not a society without unresolved questions.

It is a society in which unresolved questions can be contested without assassination.

VI. Revolutionary Maximalism

A movement becomes maximalist when anything less than the complete program is treated as failure.

Autonomy is not enough.

Reform is not enough.

Legalization is not enough.

Elections are not enough.

Language rights are not enough.

The revolution must be completed.

Maximalism has emotional clarity.

It protects the movement from compromise.

But it can also make political learning impossible.

Every improvement becomes a trap.

Every reform becomes co-option.

Every negotiation becomes betrayal.

Every moderate becomes a collaborator.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects maximalism because human liberation is usually cumulative.

A language school matters even if independence has not been achieved.

A cooperative matters even if capitalism still exists.

A municipal reform matters even if the state remains centralized.

A prison reform matters even if the justice system remains imperfect.

Partial victories are not substitutes for deeper transformation.

But neither are they meaningless.

A politics incapable of recognizing improvement becomes dependent upon misery.

It needs conditions to remain intolerable because intolerable conditions justify the organization.

VII. The Persistence of Violence

Why did ETA continue armed violence after the transition began?

Several elements must be considered.

Its objectives exceeded the end of dictatorship.

The organization sought national liberation according to its own political definition.

Revolutionary socialist currents interpreted the new order as structurally insufficient.

Distrust of state institutions remained deep.

Conflicts involving policing, prisoners, and political repression continued to shape militant narratives.

The organization possessed institutional momentum.

Armed struggle had become part of identity.

The theory of action and reaction remained influential.

Each new confrontation created new grievances.

The cycle reproduced itself.

Moshe Reed Thought does not reduce continuation to irrationality.

Organizations possess reasons.

The task is to examine whether those reasons justify the consequences.

A reason is not automatically a justification.

VIII. The Democratic Test

The true test of a liberation movement comes when people are allowed to disagree with it.

Under dictatorship, unity can be imagined.

The enemy is obvious.

Opposition is suppressed.

Different currents may cooperate against a common regime.

Under democracy, disagreement becomes visible.

Some people support independence.

Some support autonomy.

Some support the existing state structure.

Some care more about economic issues.

Some reject all nationalism.

Some support nationalism but oppose armed struggle.

The movement now confronts the real people rather than the imagined people.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the democratic test of revolutionary legitimacy**.

Can the movement accept that the people may choose differently from what the movement believes history requires?

If yes, it remains a political movement.

If no, it becomes a guardian claiming authority over the people.

This was the fundamental contradiction of continued armed vanguardism.

The organization claimed national self-determination while refusing to make popular disagreement decisive.

IX. The Inheritance of Fear

Political transitions do not erase fear.

People remember the dictatorship.

They also begin to experience new forms of fear associated with continued armed violence.

A society can therefore become trapped between memories.

One person fears the police because of past repression.

Another fears the armed organization because of threats or attacks.

Another fears speaking because neighbors may interpret words politically.

Another fears being accused of collaboration.

Moshe Reed Thought refuses to rank fear according to ideological usefulness.

Fear is politically corrosive regardless of who produces it.

A free society must reduce the power of institutions and organizations to make ordinary disagreement dangerous.

X. The Problem of the Unfinished Revolution

Revolutionary movements often declare that political transition is incomplete.

This may be true.

No social transformation is ever complete.

But the concept of incompletion can justify endless struggle.

Capitalism remains.

Therefore revolution is unfinished.

The state remains.

Therefore national liberation is unfinished.

Police remain.

Therefore authoritarianism is unfinished.

Political opponents remain.

Therefore consciousness is unfinished.

The movement can always find another reason to continue.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes a different standard.

Do methods expand human capacity?

Do they create participation?

Do they strengthen communities?

Do they reduce domination?

Do they protect culture?

Do they democratize work?

Do they allow disagreement?

If not, the movement cannot defend itself merely by saying history remains unfinished.

History is always unfinished.

That is not permission for endless war.

XI. Autonomy as Fraud or Foundation?

Regional autonomy can be interpreted in two ways.

The maximalist sees a trap.

Autonomy is designed to prevent independence.

The central state gives limited concessions to preserve deeper sovereignty.

The gradualist sees a foundation.

Autonomy creates institutions.

Institutions develop capacity.

Language policy becomes possible.

Regional political life expands.

The community gains practical experience in self-government.

Moshe Reed Thought evaluates autonomy pragmatically.

Does it create real power?

Can communities make meaningful decisions?

Does it protect culture?

Can it be expanded democratically?

Does it reduce domination?

Autonomy should not be worshipped.

Nor should it be dismissed automatically.

The commonwealth is built through institutions that allow people to practice self-government.

A perfect future cannot justify destroying imperfect structures that already expand participation.

The task is to deepen them.

XII. Violence After Political Opening

Violence changes moral meaning when political conditions change.

An act committed in the absence of legal political alternatives cannot be evaluated without that context.

When peaceful alternatives become available, the burden of justification changes.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **contextual moral transformation**.

The same tactic can possess different political meaning under different conditions.

This does not mean dictatorship automatically legitimizes violence.

It means context matters.

After political opening, continued armed struggle must answer a more difficult question:

Why is killing necessary when organizing, publishing, protesting, voting, unionizing, and building political institutions are possible?

The revolutionary may answer that these institutions are insufficient.

But insufficiency is not the same as impossibility.

This distinction is decisive.

XIII. The Organization and Its Own Past

ETA faced not only the future.

It faced its past.

The organization had created martyrs.

Prisoners existed.

Support networks existed.

Members had sacrificed years of life.

To end armed struggle could appear to imply that those sacrifices had been meaningless.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this conclusion.

A person can act courageously within a strategy that later becomes obsolete.

Changing strategy does not erase courage.

Ending violence does not insult the dead.

Continuing harmful violence cannot resurrect them.

The meaning of sacrifice should not be determined by the continuation of the institution.

The past must inform the future.

It must not own it.

XIV. When the Means Become Identity

At the beginning, armed struggle is described as a means.

Over time, it can become an identity.

The militant is not simply someone who uses a tactic.

The militant becomes a type of person.

Disciplined.

Secret.

Committed.

Sacrificial.

Defiant.

The organization becomes a community of meaning.

Ending armed struggle therefore becomes an existential crisis.

Who are we without the weapon?

Moshe Reed Thought considers this one of the deepest problems of revolutionary organizations.

A healthy movement defines itself by the life it wants to create.

An unhealthy movement defines itself by the enemy it fights.

If the enemy changes, the healthy movement adapts.

The unhealthy movement needs the enemy to remain.

XV. The Crisis of Purpose

The death of Franco created a crisis more profound than military defeat.

It created ambiguity.

ETA had been shaped within a world of dictatorship.

Now the political world was changing.

The organization could have transformed into a movement centered entirely upon political struggle.

Instead, armed activity continued.

The consequences would be severe.

Violence would enter a society undergoing democratic transformation.

The moral authority of anti-dictatorial resistance would increasingly collide with the reality of victims created after dictatorship.

The organization would claim continuity of struggle.

Many others would see continuity of violence despite political change.

This divergence would define the next phase.

Moshe Reed Thought sees the period as a warning to every revolutionary movement:

Never become so attached to a method that you become incapable of recognizing a new possibility.

The revolutionary must be capable of victory over the revolutionary identity itself.

Otherwise, the struggle becomes permanent.

Chapter 12

Autonomy or Independence?

The struggle for national freedom is often presented as a choice between two absolute conditions.

Either a people is sovereign or it is not.

Either the nation possesses independence or it remains dominated.

Either the homeland is free or it remains occupied.

Political reality is usually more complicated.

Between complete centralization and complete independence exists a wide field of institutional possibilities:

municipal self-government,

regional autonomy,

federalism,

confederalism,

shared sovereignty,

cultural autonomy,

fiscal autonomy,

asymmetrical constitutional arrangements,

and various combinations of these forms.

The development of Basque autonomy during Spain's democratic transformation created a central question for Basque politics.

Was autonomy a meaningful achievement of self-government?

Or was it a mechanism for containing the demand for independence?

Different political traditions answered differently.

For some, autonomous institutions created real spaces of Basque political, cultural, fiscal, and social development.

For revolutionary separatism, autonomy did not resolve the fundamental question of sovereignty.

The Basque homeland, as understood by radical nationalism, remained divided between two states. The right to full self-determination remained contested. The revolutionary project remained incomplete.

Moshe Reed Thought approaches this dispute through neither constitutional worship nor revolutionary maximalism.

It asks:

Where does actual power exist, who participates in exercising it, and does the institutional arrangement increase the capacity of people and communities to govern their own lives?

A flag does not answer this question.

A constitution does not answer it by itself.

Neither does the word revolution.

Freedom must be examined institutionally.

I. The Meaning of Autonomy

Autonomy means self-rule within a larger political structure.

But the word can describe very different realities.

An autonomous region may possess symbolic institutions with little meaningful authority.

Another may control education, policing, taxation, language policy, infrastructure, and major areas of social administration.

Therefore, autonomy must be evaluated concretely.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes five questions.

Who makes decisions?

Who raises and allocates resources?

Who controls institutions?

How easily can the central authority override regional decisions?

How directly can ordinary people participate?

These questions reveal the actual structure beneath constitutional language.

An autonomous parliament may be powerful relative to the central state while still being distant from municipalities.

A regional government may protect cultural rights while reproducing economic hierarchy.

A nationalist administration may speak the language of liberation while governing through ordinary bureaucracy.

Autonomy is therefore not the end of political analysis.

It is the beginning of a new level of analysis.

II. Independence as the Final Answer

For revolutionary nationalism, independence often appears as the decisive solution.

Once external sovereignty is removed, the nation becomes capable of determining its own future.

This argument possesses considerable force.

Political communities should not be governed permanently against their will.

But Moshe Reed Thought rejects the idea that independence automatically creates freedom.

An independent state can be centralized.

It can be capitalist.

It can be bureaucratic.

It can repress minorities.

It can suppress municipalities.

It can concentrate land.

It can concentrate media ownership.

It can develop security institutions beyond democratic control.

The passport changes.

The power relationship may remain.

Therefore, the question is not only:

Who owns the state?

The deeper question is:

How much of life should the state own?

Moshe Reed Thought prefers a federated commonwealth of strong communities to a highly centralized nation-state, regardless of the flag above the central building.

III. The Nation Is Not the State

Modern political thought often assumes that every nation seeks a state and every state seeks one nation.

This assumption has produced enormous conflict.

Moshe Reed Thought separates the concepts.

A nation is a historical community of memory, language, culture, place, and political consciousness.

A state is an institutional structure claiming authority over territory.

The two can overlap.

They do not have to be identical.

A state can contain several national communities.

A nation can exist across several states.

A person can participate in several identities simultaneously.

This complexity should not be treated as a defect.

The attempt to force every identity into one exclusive political container has caused repeated violence.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore favors flexible sovereignty.

Power should be distributed according to function and consent.

The municipality handles what the municipality can handle.

The region handles what requires regional coordination.

The broader federation handles what genuinely requires larger cooperation.

Sovereignty becomes layered rather than absolute.

IV. The Revolutionary Critique of Autonomy

The revolutionary critique argues that autonomy can pacify a liberation movement without resolving its fundamental goals.

The central state grants institutions.

Local elites administer them.

A new political class develops.

People become invested in the autonomous system.

The demand for independence weakens.

From the revolutionary perspective, autonomy becomes containment.

Moshe Reed Thought recognizes that institutions can co-opt.

Every structure creates beneficiaries.

Every bureaucracy develops interests.

But this does not mean every partial gain is false.

A school teaching a threatened language is real.

A regional cultural institution is real.

A municipal power is real.

A cooperative is real.

A social service is real.

The fact that an institution is incomplete does not make it imaginary.

Revolutionary maximalism often destroys the ability to distinguish between partial freedom and total domination.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this binary.

Partial freedom should be defended and expanded.

Partial domination should be criticized and reduced.

Politics is construction.

V. The Right of Self-Determination

Self-determination is one of the most powerful principles in modern political life.

But who is the self?

The nation?

The region?

The province?

The municipality?

The individual?

Suppose a larger region votes for independence while one province votes against it.

Which self determines?

Suppose a province supports independence while one municipality rejects it.

Which self determines?

Territorial politics contains nested communities.

Moshe Reed Thought offers no magical formula.

Instead, it proposes principles.

Consent should be maximized.

Coercion should be minimized.

Local autonomy should be protected.

Minority rights should not depend upon majority generosity.

Borders should not be treated as sacred metaphysical objects.

Political arrangements should remain revisable through peaceful democratic processes.

The objective is not to create a perfect map.

No perfect map exists.

The objective is to create institutions capable of living with overlapping identities.

VI. The Problem of the Dissenting Basque

Every nationalist movement eventually confronts the person who belongs culturally to the nation but rejects the movement's political goal.

What is the status of the Basque who does not support independence?

Is that person less Basque?

Misled?

Assimilated?

A traitor?

Moshe Reed Thought answers clearly:

Political disagreement does not erase cultural belonging.

No organization owns identity.

No party issues certificates of authenticity.

No armed movement determines who belongs to a people.

A nation that cannot tolerate internal disagreement is not free.

This principle is central to the Moshe Reed critique of revolutionary nationalism.

Self-determination must include the freedom to disagree about self-determination.

Otherwise, the concept becomes circular.

The people are free to choose, provided they choose what the nationalist organization has already decided.

That is not freedom.

VII. The Problem of the Migrant Worker

Industrial societies contain movement.

Workers migrate.

Families settle.

Languages meet.

Neighborhoods change.

A nationalist project must decide whether belonging is inherited or participatory.

Can a newcomer become part of the homeland?

Moshe Reed Thought rejects ethnic exclusion.

A living homeland must be capable of receiving people.

Integration does not require cultural erasure.

Nor does cultural preservation require hostility toward newcomers.

The commonwealth approach asks every resident to participate in shared civic life while supporting the survival of local culture.

This requires mutual obligation.

The established community provides inclusion.

The newcomer respects the cultural life of the place.

Public institutions make language learning accessible.

Workplaces do not use cultural differences to divide labor.

The objective is not purity.

It is participation.

VIII. Economic Sovereignty

Political autonomy without economic capacity can be fragile.

A regional government may possess legal authority while investment decisions are made elsewhere.

Factories can close.

Capital can move.

Housing can become unaffordable.

Land can be concentrated.

Tourism can transform communities into commodities.

Young people can be forced to leave.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore includes economic sovereignty within self-government.

But economic sovereignty does not mean isolation.

It means communities possess meaningful influence over the material conditions of life.

Worker cooperatives.

Community land trusts.

Public banking.

Municipal enterprises.

Regional development institutions.

Strong unions.

Social housing.

Local food systems.

Democratic planning.

These institutions make freedom tangible.

A people that possesses a parliament but cannot house its young has incomplete self-government.

A nation that possesses a flag but whose workers cannot influence the workplace has incomplete freedom.

IX. Language and Institutional Power

Language survival requires more than affection.

It requires institutional reproduction.

Children must be able to learn it.

Adults must be able to use it.

Media must exist.

Books must be published.

Public services must be accessible.

Cultural life must be economically possible.

Autonomy can provide mechanisms for this work.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore rejects the revolutionary tendency to dismiss cultural gains because final sovereignty has not been achieved.

A living language cannot wait for the perfect revolution.

It must be spoken now.

Every generation lost is irreversible.

The work of cultural survival belongs in the present tense.

X. The State Within the Nation

Nationalist movements often criticize centralized states while reproducing centralist imagination.

They demand independence and then imagine a new capital governing the liberated territory.

Moshe Reed Thought asks:

Why should liberation stop at the national government?

If centralization is dangerous in one state, why does it become harmless under another flag?

The commonwealth principle pushes power downward.

Municipalities should govern substantial local matters.

Workplaces should become democratic.

Neighborhoods should possess institutions.

Regions should coordinate rather than merely command.

National institutions should remain limited and accountable.

Federation should move outward from living communities.

The goal is not a smaller centralized state.

The goal is a different architecture of power.

XI. Autonomy as Political Education

Self-government is learned through self-government.

A population does not become capable of participation by waiting for independence.

Municipal councils, regional institutions, unions, cooperatives, associations, and civic organizations teach political capacity.

They are schools of citizenship.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore values autonomy not merely as constitutional status but as political education.

The danger is bureaucratization.

Institutions can become professionalized.

Citizens become spectators.

Political parties monopolize decision-making.

The answer is deeper participation.

Participatory budgeting.

Worker representation.

Local assemblies.

Cooperative development.

Public consultation with actual power.

Transparent institutions.

Recall and accountability mechanisms where appropriate.

Autonomy should not merely move bureaucracy closer.

It should move power closer.

XII. Independence Without Hatred

Moshe Reed Thought does not treat support for independence as inherently extremist.

A person can peacefully support independence.

Campaign for it.

Vote for it.

Write for it.

Organize for it.

Persuade others.

Build institutions demonstrating the capacity for self-government.

There is no contradiction between radical constitutional change and democratic method.

The problem begins when the movement claims that disagreement with independence is betrayal.

Or when violence is used to force political outcomes.

A free independence movement must be capable of losing a vote.

A free unionist movement must be capable of accepting a future democratic change.

Democracy requires both sides to accept uncertainty.

No constitutional arrangement should require permanent political silence.

XIII. The Moshe Reed Commonwealth Alternative

The autonomy-versus-independence debate is often too narrow.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes a broader horizon.

The objective is a federated commonwealth built from below.

Municipal democracy.

Worker cooperatives.

Regional self-government.

Cultural rights.

Public ownership of essential infrastructure.

Community ownership of land.

Democratic economic planning.

Freedom of movement.

Protection of minorities.

Layered sovereignty.

Voluntary federation.

This model asks not merely where the border stands but where power lives.

A border can change while power remains concentrated.

A constitution can remain while power becomes decentralized.

The transformation of daily life is more important than symbolic sovereignty alone.

XIV. The Armed Organization and the Autonomous Society

As Basque autonomous institutions developed, ETA faced a growing contradiction.

There now existed legal political institutions in which Basque parties participated.

There existed regional governmental capacity.

There existed expanding cultural institutions.

There existed electoral politics.

Yet the armed organization continued to claim revolutionary necessity.

Moshe Reed Thought asks:

At what point does the existence of imperfect self-government make armed substitution less defensible?

The answer is not that autonomy solved every question.

It did not.

The answer is that political context changes moral responsibility.

Where peaceful political space exists, the burden of justification for violence becomes overwhelming.

An organization cannot simply repeat arguments developed under dictatorship as though nothing changed.

History must be recognized.

XV. The Choice Beyond the Binary

Autonomy or independence?

Moshe Reed Thought answers:

The deeper choice is participation or substitution.

An autonomous region without participation can become bureaucratic.

An independent state without participation can become authoritarian.

A federation with strong local democracy can produce meaningful freedom.

An independence movement using democratic means can contribute to political life.

The decisive question is not only constitutional status.

It is the structure of power.

Who decides?

Who owns?

Who participates?

Who can dissent?

Who can leave?

Who controls the workplace?

Who controls land?

Who controls public institutions?

Who controls the organization claiming to speak for the people?

These questions lead directly into the next phase of the history.

As institutional politics expanded, ETA continued to operate through a very different logic: clandestine authority, armed coercion, and the claim that revolutionary violence remained necessary despite democratic change.

Chapter 13

Why the Armed Struggle Continued

The most difficult question in the history of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna is not why the organization emerged under dictatorship.

The more difficult question is why armed violence continued after the political environment changed.

An organization formed in 1959 under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco entered a very different historical world after 1975.

Spain underwent democratic transition.

Competitive elections returned.

Political parties operated legally.

A new constitutional order emerged.

The Basque Autonomous Community developed substantial institutions of self-government.

Basque nationalist political parties participated openly in electoral politics.

The Basque language acquired forms of institutional protection and public support that would have been impossible under the dictatorship.

Yet ETA continued its armed campaign.

This continuation cannot be explained by a single cause.

The organization's ultimate objectives extended beyond the removal of Francoism. It sought national independence and, in important ideological currents, revolutionary socialist transformation.

Its political analysis treated the post-Franco order as insufficient.

Its territorial conception of the Basque homeland exceeded the boundaries of the autonomous institutions that emerged.

Its prisoners and underground networks remained part of the conflict.

Distrust of security institutions remained intense.

Episodes of unlawful state violence and abuse reinforced militant narratives.

The organization possessed accumulated structures, identities, and memories developed through years of clandestine struggle.

And the logic of action and reaction continued to reproduce itself.

Moshe Reed Thought recognizes all of these factors.

But explanation must never become excuse.

The central question remains:

When peaceful political space expands, can an armed organization continue claiming the authority to kill in the name of people who are increasingly able to speak for themselves?

I. The Goal Was Larger Than Anti-Francoism

ETA was not merely an anti-Franco organization.

This is essential to understanding its continuation.

If its only objective had been the removal of dictatorship, the death of Franco and the transition toward democracy would have eliminated its central political purpose.

But ETA's goals were broader.

The organization pursued a vision of Basque national liberation.

Within revolutionary currents, this liberation was connected to socialist transformation.

From this perspective, democratization within Spain did not equal liberation.

The state remained.

Capitalism remained.

The desired territorial unity had not been achieved.

Full independence had not been achieved.

Therefore, the struggle remained unfinished.

Moshe Reed Thought accepts the logical consistency of this position while rejecting its conclusion.

A political objective can remain unfulfilled without making armed violence necessary.

Millions of people live within political systems they want to change.

Democrats seek constitutional reform.

Socialists seek economic transformation.

Nationalists seek independence.

Federalists seek decentralization.

Republicans seek abolition of monarchy.

Environmentalists seek structural changes to production.

The existence of an unfulfilled goal does not create a right to kill.

Politics exists precisely because people disagree about the future.

II. The Theory of False Democracy

Revolutionary movements often distinguish between formal democracy and real democracy.

This distinction can be valuable.

A society may hold elections while wealth remains concentrated.

Media ownership may shape public debate.

Workers may vote politically while possessing little authority in the workplace.

Regional communities may possess limited autonomy while major sovereign powers remain centralized.

Moshe Reed Thought shares many criticisms of shallow democracy.

But the concept of false democracy becomes dangerous when it is used to erase every meaningful distinction between dictatorship and political freedom.

If all non-revolutionary systems are equally illegitimate, then elections change nothing.

Civil liberties change nothing.

Regional autonomy changes nothing.

Legal political organization changes nothing.

The revolutionary organization preserves the same strategy under every condition.

This is not materialist analysis.

It is dogma.

Moshe Reed Thought insists upon degrees, transitions, contradictions, and concrete institutional analysis.

An imperfect democracy is not a dictatorship merely because it is imperfect.

The task is to deepen democracy, not to deny every gain that complicates revolutionary theory.

III. The Unresolved Territorial Question

The autonomous arrangements that emerged did not correspond completely to ETA's territorial conception of the Basque homeland.

For revolutionary nationalism, this mattered fundamentally.

The homeland remained politically divided.

The organization therefore argued that the national question remained unresolved.

Moshe Reed Thought recognizes the legitimacy of peaceful debate over borders, sovereignty, and political association.

No existing constitutional map should be treated as eternally sacred.

But a territorial claim does not create unlimited authority.

The people living within disputed or claimed territories possess political agency.

They cannot be reduced to lines on a nationalist map.

The principle of self-determination must include actual democratic consent.

An armed organization cannot declare a territorial future on behalf of populations whose political views are diverse.

A map is not a referendum.

A historical claim is not automatic consent.

A nation is not an organization.

IV. The Prisoner Question

Prisoners become central to long conflicts.

Every arrest creates another family connected to the struggle.

Every conviction creates another campaign.

Every dispute over prison conditions becomes political.

Prisoner solidarity becomes part of movement identity.

Moshe Reed Thought insists upon universal human rights for prisoners.

Humane treatment is not conditional upon political approval.

Allegations of torture or abuse require serious investigation.

Prison policies can have profound effects upon families and communities.

But the existence of prisoners cannot justify an endless cycle.

Violence creates arrests.

Arrests create prisoners.

Prisoners become a reason for continued violence.

Continued violence creates more prisoners.

The organization becomes trapped in a structure that reproduces one of its own grievances.

The cycle must be broken politically.

V. State Abuses and the Renewal of Militant Narratives

A democratic transition does not guarantee perfect institutions.

Where security forces commit abuses, where torture allegations are credible, or where unlawful counterterrorist violence occurs, the legitimacy of the state is damaged.

Such abuses provide armed organizations with powerful propaganda.

The militant says:

The dictatorship changed its language, not its nature.

Moshe Reed Thought condemns unlawful state violence without qualification.

The state possesses greater institutional power and therefore bears a correspondingly high responsibility for legality and accountability.

But state wrongdoing does not create moral immunity for non-state violence.

Two wrongs can coexist.

This seems obvious.

In polarized conflict, it becomes difficult to say.

One camp demands condemnation of terrorism while minimizing state abuse.

The other condemns state abuse while romanticizing revolutionary violence.

Moshe Reed Thought refuses the forced choice.

Torture is wrong.

Assassination is wrong.

Unlawful state violence is wrong.

Civilian bombing is wrong.

Political intimidation is wrong.

Moral consistency is not neutrality.

It is the refusal to outsource conscience to a faction.

VI. The Weight of the Dead

Organizations inherit their dead.

Every death creates memory.

Every memory creates obligation.

At least, this is how movements often experience it.

The dead fought for liberation.

Therefore the living must continue.

To stop would mean betrayal.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this logic.

The dead cannot command the future.

They cannot be asked whether changing conditions would have changed their judgment.

They cannot revise strategy.

The living interpret them.

This gives the living enormous power.

A movement can make the dead demand almost anything.

The ethical responsibility of memory is therefore restraint.

Remember the dead.

Honor courage where courage existed.

Acknowledge wrongdoing where wrongdoing occurred.

But do not turn graves into recruitment offices.

VII. The Organization as an Interest

A political organization can develop interests distinct from its stated purpose.

It needs resources.

It needs members.

It needs relevance.

It needs leadership structures.

It needs communication networks.

It needs supporters.

It needs reasons to continue.

Moshe Reed Thought does not claim that every member consciously thinks:

The organization must survive for its own sake.

Institutional self-preservation is often unconscious.

The organization interprets reality through categories that justify its existence.

Peace proposals appear deceptive.

Reforms appear insufficient.

Moderates appear compromised.

Elections appear manipulated.

Critics appear hostile.

The institution becomes incapable of imagining a world in which its own disappearance would be a success.

This is the central organizational test:

Can the movement imagine completing its purpose and becoming unnecessary?

If not, the movement may have become an end in itself.

VIII. The Social Environment of Armed Struggle

An armed organization does not survive through isolated militants alone.

It exists within a wider social environment.

There may be legal political movements, prisoner-support networks, cultural organizations, families, sympathizers, critics, and communities with varying relationships to the armed struggle.

These relationships are complex.

Support for independence does not automatically mean support for ETA.

Support for prisoner rights does not automatically mean support for violence.

Criticism of the Spanish state does not automatically mean endorsement of armed struggle.

Moshe Reed Thought warns against collapsing an entire political environment into one category.

States often make this error when they treat broad communities as security threats.

Armed movements make a parallel error when they treat broad nationalist sympathy as approval of organizational strategy.

Political complexity must be preserved.

IX. Fear as Political Infrastructure

Violence does more than kill.

It structures behavior.

A politician may change routines.

A journalist may avoid a subject.

A business owner may pay under threat.

A citizen may hide an opinion.

A family may move.

A local official may resign.

Fear becomes part of political infrastructure.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the argument that fear is acceptable when serving liberation.

A frightened person is not participating freely.

A payment made under threat is not solidarity.

Silence under intimidation is not support.

Political legitimacy requires the possibility of refusal.

This is one of the most important principles in the entire Moshe Reed framework:

The freedom to say no is the measure of whether a political relationship is truly voluntary.

X. Revolutionary Time

Revolutionary movements often live within a special conception of time.

Ordinary politics appears slow.

The revolution appears urgent.

Compromise delays liberation.

Delay prolongs oppression.

Therefore immediate action becomes morally necessary.

But armed conflicts can continue for decades.

The strategy of urgency produces permanent struggle.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this the paradox of revolutionary time.

The movement rejects gradual institution-building because it is too slow.

Then it enters a conflict lasting generations.

A cooperative can be built in years.

A language school can educate children immediately.

A municipal institution can expand participation within one political cycle.

An armed conflict may consume the same generation without achieving its stated goal.

Patience is not passivity.

Construction has its own speed.

XI. The Fear of Political Absorption

Armed movements may fear that participation in ordinary politics will dissolve revolutionary purpose.

Elections create compromise.

Institutions create careers.

Administration creates routine.

The revolutionary becomes a politician.

The militant becomes a committee member.

The heroic struggle becomes budget negotiation.

This can appear spiritually empty compared with revolutionary mythology.

But Moshe Reed Thought asks:

What is liberation for?

If the goal is to improve human life, then administration matters.

Housing budgets matter.

Schools matter.

Transit matters.

Language education matters.

Workplace institutions matter.

Waste management matters.

Healthcare matters.

The ordinary is not the betrayal of politics.

The ordinary is where people live.

A revolution incapable of respecting ordinary life will eventually sacrifice it to abstraction.

XII. The Failure to Hear the Population

An organization may believe it knows what the people truly want beneath fear, propaganda, or false consciousness.

This belief makes evidence difficult to interpret.

If the population supports the movement, support proves legitimacy.

If the population rejects the movement, rejection proves manipulation.

The organization cannot lose the argument because every result confirms the theory.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **closed representation**.

Closed representation occurs when an organization claims to represent people while refusing every mechanism through which those people might reject its representation.

This is the opposite of democracy.

The people become symbolic.

The organization becomes real.

Moshe Reed Thought reverses the relationship.

The people are real.

The organization is temporary.

XIII. Why Movements Continue

ETA continued because several forces reinforced one another.

The final goals remained unachieved.

The post-Franco order was interpreted as insufficient.

Territorial demands remained unresolved.

Prisoner issues reproduced political mobilization.

State abuses reinforced distrust.

Clandestine structures already existed.

Organizational identity was tied to armed struggle.

The dead created memory.

The theory of action and reaction provided strategic justification.

The organization possessed a wider political and social environment.

Each new violent episode created new grievances.

The conflict became self-reproducing.

Moshe Reed Thought describes this as **conflict institutionalization**.

The conflict no longer exists only because of its original cause.

It develops new causes through its continuation.

Yesterday's violence creates today's prisoner.

Today's prisoner becomes tomorrow's grievance.

Today's attack creates tomorrow's security operation.

Tomorrow's abuse creates another recruit.

The conflict feeds itself.

XIV. The Alternative That Was Always Present

The alternative to armed struggle was not surrender.

This must be emphasized.

Political organizing was possible.

Electoral participation was possible.

Labor struggle was possible.

Cultural revival was possible.

Language education was possible.

Cooperative development was possible.

Municipal politics was possible.

Mass demonstration was possible.

Public advocacy was possible.

International campaigning was possible.

Independence could remain a political objective.

Socialism could remain a political objective.

The choice was not between armed struggle and forgetting the Basque question.

The choice was between different forms of struggle.

Moshe Reed Thought favors methods that increase the capacity of ordinary people to participate.

The revolution must become social construction.

XV. From Continuation to Entrapment

The continuation of armed struggle gradually transformed the political question.

The issue was no longer only:

Why did ETA begin?

It became:

Why could ETA not stop?

The answer lies partly in ideology.

Partly in institutional momentum.

Partly in memory.

Partly in retaliation.

Partly in political calculation.

Partly in the psychology of underground identity.

Partly in the actions of the state.

But ultimately, organizations are responsible for choices.

History influences.

It does not command.

Moshe Reed Thought refuses fatalism.

ETA was not mechanically forced to continue.

The state was not mechanically forced to commit abuses.

Political actors made decisions.

Different decisions were possible.

This recognition is necessary because without agency there can be no accountability.

And without accountability, history becomes merely a machine producing victims.

Chapter 14

GAL and the Dirty War

A democratic state is tested most severely when confronting those who reject its laws.

It is easy for institutions to speak of legality during ordinary times.

The true test comes when officials believe the law is inconvenient.

When the enemy is violent.

When the public is afraid.

When police are frustrated.

When intelligence is incomplete.

When political leaders demand results.

When legal procedures appear slow.

Under such conditions, a dangerous argument emerges:

The enemy operates outside the law.

Therefore, the state must operate outside the law to defeat it.

This argument destroys the distinction between law and vengeance.

During the conflict involving Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Spain experienced one of the most notorious examples of unlawful counterterrorism in the form of the Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación, commonly known as GAL.

GAL operated during the 1980s and became associated with kidnappings, torture, and killings carried out in the context of a clandestine campaign against people believed to be connected with ETA and its environment. The scandal surrounding GAL exposed links between unlawful violence and elements of the Spanish state apparatus, and subsequent judicial proceedings established criminal responsibility in important cases involving officials.

For Moshe Reed Thought, the significance of GAL extends beyond one historical episode.

GAL represents a universal warning:

When the state abandons law to defeat political violence, it does not merely commit another crime. It attacks the very principle that distinguishes legitimate public authority from clandestine coercion.

ETA's violence did not justify GAL.

GAL did not justify ETA.

The crimes of one actor did not become the moral property of the other.

The conflict must be understood without surrendering judgment to either camp.

I. The Temptation of the Secret State

Every state possesses visible institutions.

Parliaments.

Courts.

Police agencies.

Ministries.

Prisons.

Administrative bodies.

But states can also develop hidden structures.

Intelligence operations.

Classified programs.

Confidential networks.

Unofficial relationships.

Secret funds.

The existence of secrecy is not automatically illegitimate.

States may require confidential intelligence capabilities.

Witnesses may require protection.

Investigations may require discretion.

But secrecy becomes dangerous when it creates a space where officials believe ordinary law no longer applies.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the shadow sovereignty of the state**.

Shadow sovereignty emerges when public authority acts through hidden power while avoiding public accountability.

The state says:

Trust us.

We cannot explain what we are doing.

The citizen is expected to accept power without knowledge.

This is dangerous in every political system.

It becomes especially dangerous when hidden institutions possess the power to abduct, torture, or kill.

II. Democracy Cannot Defend Itself by Becoming Its Enemy

The defenders of unlawful counterterrorism often appeal to necessity.

The terrorist organization is secretive.

It crosses borders.

It intimidates witnesses.

It kills.

Ordinary law is too slow.

Therefore extraordinary methods are required.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this logic.

The purpose of democratic law is not to protect only easy cases.

Law exists precisely to restrain power when officials are most tempted to act without restraint.

If legal limits disappear whenever the state identifies a serious enemy, then rights are not rights.

They are permissions granted during calm periods.

A democratic society must be capable of arresting, investigating, prosecuting, and imprisoning people responsible for serious violence.

But it must do so through accountable institutions.

Otherwise, the state teaches the public that violence is the true language of power.

This is exactly the lesson the armed organization wants people to believe.

III. The Mirror of the Underground

In the previous chapters, Moshe Reed Thought described the mirror of sovereignty.

The underground organization begins to imitate state functions.

It gathers intelligence.

It extracts resources.

It punishes.

It claims legitimacy.

It defines enemies.

The dirty war reveals the opposite process.

The state begins to imitate the underground.

Secret groups.

Hidden chains of responsibility.

Abduction.

Violence outside judicial process.

Unofficial punishment.

Plausible deniability.

Thus, the state and the armed organization move toward one another structurally.

They remain different in scale and institutional position.

But both begin acting through hidden coercion.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **reciprocal degradation**.

The enemy does not merely injure the other physically.

Each side helps morally deform the other.

The organization points to state abuse as proof that violence is necessary.

The state points to organizational violence as proof that legality is insufficient.

Each becomes the other's justification.

IV. GAL as Political Failure

The dirty war was not merely a moral failure.

It was also a political failure.

Unlawful state violence strengthens the narrative of the armed movement.

ETA could point to GAL and argue:

The democratic state is only a new mask.

The institutions of law are fraudulent.

The state uses secret violence while condemning ours.

For people already distrustful of Spanish institutions, GAL provided powerful evidence.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes a strategic principle:

State illegality is propaganda created for the state's enemies.

Every secret crime gives the armed movement another story.

Every act of torture creates another testimony.

Every unlawful killing creates another funeral.

Every cover-up creates another reason for distrust.

A state cannot defeat a political narrative while producing evidence that appears to confirm it.

V. The Victim Does Not Change According to the Perpetrator

Political camps often divide victims according to usefulness.

A victim of ETA becomes important to one camp.

A victim of unlawful state violence becomes important to another.

Each side remembers selectively.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects selective humanity.

A person abducted or killed unlawfully remains a victim regardless of political affiliation.

A civilian killed in an ETA attack remains a victim regardless of the organization's explanation.

A prisoner tortured in custody remains a victim regardless of accusation.

A police officer murdered because of occupation remains a human being regardless of uniform.

Human dignity cannot depend upon faction.

The victim does not become less real because recognition is politically inconvenient.

VI. Torture and the Corruption of Truth

Torture is often defended through the language of information.

The state needs intelligence.

Lives are at risk.

Time is limited.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects torture morally and epistemically.

A person under extreme suffering may say what the interrogator wants to hear.

False information can become evidence.

The institution begins to confuse pain with truth.

But the deeper corruption is institutional.

Once torture is accepted in exceptional cases, institutions develop methods for defining exceptions.

The exception expands.

Documentation becomes incomplete.

Medical evidence becomes contested.

Oversight weakens.

Colleagues protect colleagues.

The institution learns silence.

Torture therefore corrupts not only the victim's body.

It corrupts the information system and moral culture of the institution using it.

VII. Political Responsibility and Chains of Command

Secret violence creates a problem of responsibility.

Who knew?

Who ordered?

Who financed?

Who approved?

Who ignored?

Who benefited politically?

Who attempted to conceal?

The hidden nature of the structure makes accountability difficult.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the idea that responsibility ends with the person who physically commits an act.

Institutions operate through chains of authority.

Political responsibility can exist at several levels.

The direct perpetrator bears responsibility for the act.

The organizer bears responsibility for coordination.

The official who knowingly authorizes unlawful conduct bears responsibility.

The institution that conceals abuse bears responsibility for obstruction.

But responsibility must be established through evidence.

Moshe Reed Thought opposes both impunity and conspiracy without proof.

The purpose of accountability is truth.

Not myth.

VIII. The Rule of Law as a Revolutionary Principle

Revolutionaries sometimes dismiss the rule of law as bourgeois language.

Moshe Reed Thought disagrees.

Law can serve ruling interests.

Courts can be unequal.

Police can abuse power.

Legal systems can protect property more effectively than human dignity.

But the answer is democratic law, not lawlessness.

The worker needs law against wage theft.

The tenant needs law against illegal eviction.

The prisoner needs law against torture.

The minority needs law against discrimination.

The citizen needs law against arbitrary arrest.

The dissident needs law against political retaliation.

Law is not sufficient for liberation.

But accountable law is one of the protections ordinary people possess against concentrated power.

The powerful often survive lawlessness better than the weak.

IX. The False Choice Between Security and Rights

Governments often present security and rights as opposites.

More rights mean less security.

More security means fewer rights.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this simple equation.

Unaccountable security practices can produce insecurity.

They create distrust.

Radicalization.

False intelligence.

Institutional corruption.

Public fear.

Political polarization.

A lawful security institution can protect life while remaining accountable.

The difficulty is real.

The answer is not magical.

But democratic societies must resist the fantasy that secret violence creates durable security.

Fear may suppress a symptom.

It cannot resolve the political conditions beneath it.

X. ETA's Use of State Abuse

Armed organizations use state wrongdoing politically.

This is predictable.

Every abuse becomes evidence.

Every scandal becomes recruitment material.

Every unlawful operation becomes proof of the organization's worldview.

But Moshe Reed Thought warns against another logical error.

The existence of state abuse does not validate every claim made by the armed movement.

GAL was real.

It was criminal.

Its existence did not make ETA's entire political analysis correct.

Nor did it justify continued attacks.

Truth must be separated from ideological ownership.

One side can be correct about the wrongdoing of another while remaining wrong about its own conduct.

This is a difficult principle in polarized politics.

It is also essential.

XI. The Democratic State Must Confess

Institutions often fear admitting wrongdoing.

They believe confession weakens authority.

Moshe Reed Thought argues the opposite.

Denial weakens authority when evidence exists.

Accountability can strengthen legitimacy.

A democratic state should be capable of investigating itself.

Prosecuting officials.

Opening records where possible.

Compensating victims.

Acknowledging wrongdoing.

Reforming institutions.

Teaching future generations what happened.

This is not national humiliation.

It is democratic maturity.

The state that cannot confess becomes dependent upon mythology.

XII. The Movement Must Also Confess

The same principle applies to revolutionary movements.

ETA could not demand complete accountability from the state while treating its own violence as historically exempt.

A movement that names the state's victims while refusing to name its own creates another selective memory.

Moshe Reed Thought requires reciprocal truth.

The state must account for torture, unlawful violence, and dirty-war activity.

The armed organization must account for assassinations, bombings, coercion, extortion, and intimidation.

No actor receives moral immunity.

No victim is erased.

No archive belongs exclusively to one narrative.

The purpose of memory is not to create equal blame where responsibility differs.

The purpose is to prevent selective truth.

XIII. The Closed Dialectic Intensifies

GAL intensified the closed dialectic of enemies.

ETA pointed to unlawful state violence.

The state pointed to ETA's continuing attacks.

Each side possessed evidence of the other's wrongdoing.

Each side used that evidence to justify further action.

This is how conflicts become morally self-sustaining.

The enemy is always guilty enough to justify continuation.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes a principle of interruption:

Someone must refuse to let the enemy determine the limits of one's own morality.

The state must remain lawful even when attacked.

The movement must respect human life even when repressed.

The individual must retain conscience even when the group demands loyalty.

Without interruption, the enemy becomes the author of your behavior.

XIV. Lessons of the Dirty War

The dirty war teaches several enduring lessons.

Democratic institutions can commit serious abuses.

Counterterrorism requires accountability.

Secrecy must have limits.

Victims must not be divided by faction.

Torture destroys both human dignity and institutional truth.

Unlawful state violence strengthens militant narratives.

Security without legality becomes another form of insecurity.

No government should imitate the methods of the clandestine organization it opposes.

These lessons extend beyond the Basque conflict.

Every society facing political violence encounters the temptation of exception.

Moshe Reed Thought answers:

The more serious the threat, the more important disciplined legality becomes.

XV. Toward the Economics of Coercion

The dirty war revealed how the state could descend into shadow sovereignty.

The next chapter examines the shadow sovereignty of the armed organization.

A clandestine movement requires money.

Money supports organization.

Organization supports prisoners, publications, political networks, and underground activity.

But when voluntary support is insufficient, the organization may turn toward coercive extraction.

The language changes.

The demand becomes a contribution.

The threat becomes revolutionary authority.

Extortion becomes revolutionary taxation.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this transformation.

A payment made under threat is not solidarity.

It is coercion.

Chapter 15

The Revolutionary Tax: Extortion and Shadow Sovereignty

Every organization requires resources.

Political movements require meeting spaces, publications, transportation, legal assistance, communication, and organizers.

Underground organizations require additional resources because clandestinity is expensive.

Members may require financial support.

Prisoner networks require assistance.

Exile creates costs.

Secret communication requires infrastructure.

Armed activity requires material resources.

The question is therefore unavoidable:

Who pays?

A democratic organization asks supporters to contribute voluntarily.

A public institution taxes through a legal system that, however imperfectly, is connected to public authority and political accountability.

A criminal organization demands payment under threat.

An armed revolutionary organization may create another category in its own language.

It may call coercive payment a revolutionary tax.

The language attempts to transform the relationship.

The organization is no longer asking for support.

It is claiming authority.

The person receiving the demand is no longer treated as a citizen with the right to refuse.

The person becomes a subject of revolutionary sovereignty.

For Moshe Reed Thought, the political meaning is clear:

A payment made under threat is not solidarity.

The term used by the organization does not change the human relationship.

Coercion remains coercion.

ETA's use of extortion, commonly discussed through the language of the so-called revolutionary tax, represented more than a financing method. It expressed the organization's claim to a form of shadow sovereignty.

The organization acted as though it possessed the authority to identify who owed resources to the struggle.

It determined the amount.

It communicated the demand.

It expected compliance.

And the possibility of consequences gave the demand force.

This chapter examines that relationship not as an operational system but as a political and moral structure.

The central question is:

Can a movement claim to liberate a people while forcing members of that society to finance it?

I. From Donation to Demand

Voluntary contribution creates a relationship of support.

A person believes in a cause.

The person contributes money.

The organization receives resources.

The relationship can end if the supporter changes opinion.

Coercive financing creates a different relationship.

The organization decides that payment is owed.

The recipient may disagree.

Disagreement does not cancel the demand.

Fear enters the relationship.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies the right of refusal as the decisive distinction.

If a person cannot safely say no, the relationship is not voluntary.

This principle applies far beyond political financing.

It applies to employment.

Religion.

Political parties.

Personal relationships.

Military organizations.

States.

The ability to refuse reveals the distribution of power.

II. Taxation and Legitimacy

All states use taxation.

Why, then, does Moshe Reed Thought distinguish taxation from revolutionary extortion?

The answer is not that every state tax is automatically just.

States can tax unfairly.

Tax systems can serve wealthy interests.

Public funds can be wasted.

Governments can be corrupt.

But democratic taxation possesses at least the possibility of public authorization and accountability.

Citizens can debate tax policy.

Legislatures enact law.

Courts can review disputes.

Governments can be replaced.

Budgets can be examined.

These mechanisms may be imperfect.

But they exist as principles of public accountability.

The underground organization offers no comparable relationship.

The recipient of a demand cannot vote the organization out of office.

The amount cannot be publicly debated.

The decision-making process is hidden.

The use of funds is not publicly accountable.

The organization therefore claims the power of taxation without accepting the obligations of democratic government.

This is shadow sovereignty.

III. The Language of Revolutionary Obligation

Revolutionary organizations often frame financial demands morally.

The struggle benefits the people.

Therefore, those who possess resources should contribute.

Those who refuse are selfish.

Or hostile.

Or collaborators.

Or beneficiaries of an unjust system.

The moral category justifies the financial demand.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this logic.

A movement cannot declare itself the representative of the people and then use that self-declaration to compel the people to finance it.

This is circular legitimacy.

The organization says:

We represent you.

Therefore you owe us.

The person replies:

I do not support you.

The organization answers:

Your opposition proves that you do not understand your true interests.

The possibility of refusal disappears.

Political representation becomes possession.

IV. Fear as an Economic Instrument

Capitalism is often criticized because economic necessity can compel people to accept conditions they would otherwise reject.

Moshe Reed Thought shares the criticism of coercive economic relationships.

But an anti-capitalist organization must not reproduce coercion in another form.

Extortion uses fear as an economic instrument.

The recipient calculates danger.

What happens if payment is refused?

What happens to the business?

What happens to the family?

What happens to employees?

The decision is made under pressure.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the political economy of fear**.

Fear can move resources.

But resources obtained through fear do not create solidarity.

They create silence.

Resentment.

Compliance.

And sometimes exile.

A movement financed through fear gradually loses the ability to distinguish genuine support from coerced obedience.

V. The Business Owner as Category

Revolutionary socialism often treats the capitalist class structurally.

This can be analytically useful.

Ownership creates power.

Large concentrations of capital can dominate workers, communities, and governments.

But structural analysis becomes dangerous when every individual assigned to a class category is treated as personally interchangeable.

A multinational executive, a major industrial owner, a family shopkeeper, and a small cooperative member do not possess identical social power.

Moshe Reed Thought insists upon concrete analysis.

The term business owner describes a legal relationship.

It does not automatically determine moral character.

The goal of socialism should be transformation of ownership and power.

Not indiscriminate hostility toward everyone assigned to an economic category.

A movement that claims to liberate workers should build worker institutions.

A movement that opposes concentrated ownership should create cooperatives.

A movement that wants economic democracy should demonstrate it.

Coercive extraction does not create socialist consciousness.

It creates fear.

VI. The Worker Inside the Targeted Business

Economic coercion rarely affects only the person directly receiving the demand.

A business is a social network.

Workers depend upon wages.

Families depend upon workers.

Suppliers depend upon contracts.

Communities depend upon economic stability.

When fear enters the workplace, the effects spread.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore rejects simplistic revolutionary imagery in which an economic target is an isolated symbol.

Economic life is interconnected.

This does not mean unjust ownership should remain untouched.

It means transformation requires institutions capable of preserving human livelihood while changing power relations.

Cooperative conversion is different from destruction.

Worker buyouts are different from intimidation.

Public acquisition through accountable law is different from clandestine extraction.

The method creates the social relationship.

VII. Exit Through Exile

When people face sustained threats, some leave.

The departure of a business owner is not merely an individual event.

Capital may leave.

Workers may lose employment.

Families may relocate.

Community relationships change.

Political diversity narrows.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **coercive homogenization**.

A territory can become politically more uniform not because everyone has been persuaded, but because some people become silent or leave.

This creates an illusion of consensus.

The movement says:

The people support us.

But some opponents are gone.

Some are afraid.

Some remain silent.

Political legitimacy cannot be measured where fear shapes visibility.

VIII. The Revolutionary Organization as Parallel State

The revolutionary tax reveals a broader transformation.

The armed organization begins to perform functions associated with sovereignty.

It identifies territory.

It claims representation.

It raises funds.

It gathers information.

It imposes discipline.

It punishes perceived betrayal.

It issues political statements.

It negotiates.

It maintains prisoner structures.

The organization becomes a parallel state without open elections.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the assumption that opposition to the existing state automatically makes parallel sovereignty liberating.

Power must be judged by structure.

Who decides?

Who can challenge the decision?

Who can leave?

Who can refuse?

Who investigates abuse?

Who controls resources?

Who replaces leadership?

Without answers, revolutionary sovereignty can become authoritarian before achieving formal power.

IX. The Corruption of the Cause

A movement may begin with genuine grievances.

Cultural suppression.

Political exclusion.

Economic injustice.

State repression.

These grievances can be real.

But a just grievance can be corrupted by unjust methods.

Moshe Reed Thought refuses the idea that acknowledging wrongdoing by a movement invalidates the original grievance.

This is important.

One can recognize Basque cultural rights while condemning extortion.

One can support regional autonomy or independence through democratic means while rejecting armed coercion.

One can condemn state torture while condemning ETA violence.

One can defend prisoner rights without endorsing the organization.

The refusal of false choices is essential to political maturity.

X. Financing as Moral Education

How a movement raises resources teaches members what kind of society they are building.

A cooperative movement teaches contribution and shared ownership.

A union teaches dues connected to membership and representation.

A democratic party teaches voluntary support and public campaigning.

A mutual-aid network teaches reciprocity.

A movement relying upon coercive extraction teaches that political conviction creates entitlement to another person's resources.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that financing is not merely technical.

It is moral education.

Institutions teach through practice.

The future is rehearsed through ordinary procedures.

If the movement wants democratic socialism, it must finance itself through democratic relationships.

If it wants a commonwealth, it must build common institutions.

XI. The Problem of Revolutionary Necessity

The defense of coercive financing often returns to necessity.

The struggle requires money.

The organization cannot survive without resources.

Therefore, extraordinary methods are necessary.

Moshe Reed Thought asks:

Necessary for what?

Necessary for the people?

Or necessary for the continuation of the organization?

This distinction is decisive.

An organization can confuse its own survival with the survival of the cause.

If the organization cannot continue without coercing the population, perhaps the organization should not continue in its existing form.

No institution possesses an unconditional right to survival.

The church does not.

The party does not.

The corporation does not.

The state does not.

The revolutionary organization does not.

Institutions are instruments.

Human beings are ends.

XII. The Commonwealth Alternative to Revolutionary Taxation

Moshe Reed Thought proposes economic construction rather than coercive extraction.

A movement seeking social transformation can build:

worker cooperatives,

credit unions,

mutual-aid societies,

community land trusts,

union funds,

public banking campaigns,

municipal enterprises,

cooperative housing,

consumer cooperatives,

cultural associations,

educational institutions,

and voluntary political organizations.

These structures create resources while increasing social capacity.

They also demonstrate the desired future.

The cooperative is socialism practiced in miniature.

The assembly is democracy practiced in miniature.

The cultural school is national preservation practiced in miniature.

The commonwealth grows through institutions that people can enter voluntarily and govern collectively.

This is slower than threatening payment.

It is also more revolutionary in the deepest sense.

It changes social relationships.

XIII. The Right to Refuse

The revolutionary tax returns us to the foundational principle of Moshe Reed Thought.

Can the person say no?

If the answer is no, domination exists.

The worker must be able to challenge management.

The citizen must be able to challenge government.

The believer must be able to challenge religious authority.

The party member must be able to challenge leadership.

The resident must be able to oppose nationalism.

The nationalist must be able to advocate independence.

The business owner must be able to reject an armed organization's financial demand without fear of violent retaliation.

Freedom is not measured by whether people make the correct choice.

Freedom is measured by whether they are permitted to choose.

XIV. The Cost of Shadow Sovereignty

Shadow sovereignty damages more than its direct targets.

It changes the entire political environment.

People become cautious.

Rumors spread.

Businesses calculate risk.

Families fear letters or threats.

Political opponents reduce visibility.

The organization becomes present even when physically absent.

Fear becomes ambient.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the invisible occupation of political life**.

A movement can oppose territorial occupation while creating psychological occupation.

The person begins adjusting behavior according to what the organization might think.

This is not liberation.

Liberation expands the space of human action.

Fear contracts it.

XV. From Money to Civilian Harm

The revolutionary tax demonstrates how an armed movement can develop powers beyond direct confrontation with the state.

The organization increasingly affects ordinary economic and civic life.

Its decisions reach business owners.

Workers.

Families.

Local politicians.

Journalists.

Residents.

The distinction between battlefield and society disappears.

This leads to the next moral crisis.

Political violence often begins with claims of precise targeting.

But prolonged armed conflict expands the circle of victims.

Bombings kill unintended people.

Assassinations strike beyond the alleged target.

Families are destroyed.

Children are killed.

Ordinary workers die because they happen to be in a particular place.

The revolutionary explanation then confronts the human consequence.

Chapter 16

Civilian Casualties and the Collapse of Revolutionary Abstraction

Every ideology speaks in categories.

The people.

The nation.

The workers.

The revolution.

The state.

The enemy.

The oppressed.

The ruling class.

Categories are necessary for political analysis. Without them, it would be difficult to discuss institutions, classes, historical forces, or collective interests.

But human beings do not die as categories.

They die as particular people.

A worker leaving a shift.

A child traveling with family.

A shopper entering a building.

A person sitting in a café.

A passerby crossing a street.

A resident sleeping at home.

A police officer returning to a family.

A politician with children.

A migrant worker who had no connection to the conflict.

A person who happened to be standing in the wrong place.

When political violence kills civilians, revolutionary abstraction confronts human reality.

The organization may issue an explanation.

The operation had a political objective.

The intended target was different.

Warnings were supposedly given.

The state failed to respond.

The deaths were unintended.

The attack was retaliation.

The casualties were regrettable.

Responsibility belonged to the enemy.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects every attempt to make the dead disappear inside explanation.

Context matters.

Intention matters.

Foreseeability matters.

Responsibility matters.

But after every analysis, the person remains dead.

The central principle of this chapter is therefore simple:

No political objective can make civilian life irrelevant.

I. The Civilian as an Obstacle to Theory

Revolutionary theory often imagines a conflict between two organized forces.

The movement and the state.

The guerrilla and the army.

The oppressed nation and the occupying power.

The proletariat and the ruling class.

But society is not composed of two armies.

Most people are living ordinary lives.

They work.

Raise children.

Study.

Care for relatives.

Disagree politically.

Change their minds.

Avoid politics.

Join unions.

Attend religious services.

Play sports.

Fall in love.

Move between regions.

Speak several languages.

Hold contradictory opinions.

The civilian disrupts the clean revolutionary map.

The civilian may oppose the state and the armed organization.

The civilian may support independence but reject violence.

The civilian may support autonomy.

The civilian may support neither nationalism nor centralism.

The civilian may simply want to live.

Moshe Reed Thought begins political ethics with this complexity.

The ordinary person does not owe ideological simplicity to history.

II. Intention and Foreseeability

There is a moral difference between deliberately targeting civilians and causing unintended civilian deaths.

This distinction matters.

Moshe Reed Thought does not erase it.

But intention is not the only question.

Foreseeability matters.

If an action is conducted in a place where civilians are predictably present, the organization cannot escape responsibility simply by saying civilians were not the intended target.

The question becomes:

What risks were knowingly imposed upon others?

Who had the authority to impose them?

What alternatives existed?

Was the political objective proportionate to the foreseeable danger?

Could the action have been abandoned?

The language of accident becomes morally inadequate when the risk was predictable.

III. The Politics of Warning

Armed organizations sometimes claim that warnings transfer responsibility.

A warning is issued.

The organization then argues that authorities failed to evacuate or respond properly.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the idea that a warning automatically transfers moral responsibility for violence.

The actor creating the danger remains responsible for creating the danger.

Authorities may bear responsibility for failures in response where such failures occur.

But responsibility can be shared without being transferred entirely.

This is another central principle:

Responsibility is not a single object that only one actor can possess.

Several actors can make wrongful decisions in the same event.

Political maturity requires the ability to hold more than one responsibility in view.

IV. The Victim as Statistical Problem

Long conflicts produce numbers.

Deaths.

Injuries.

Arrests.

Prisoners.

Displaced people.

Attacks.

Operations.

Statistics are necessary.

They allow comparison.

They reveal scale.

But numbers can create distance.

One death is a tragedy with a name.

Hundreds of deaths become a historical category.

Moshe Reed Thought insists upon returning from number to person.

Every number was a life.

Every life contained relationships.

Every relationship produced grief.

The purpose of statistics should be understanding scale, not reducing humanity.

V. The Collapse of the Clean Target

Armed organizations often justify violence through the concept of the legitimate target.

The target represents the oppressive system.

But prolonged conflict expands the category.

A police officer becomes a target.

Then a politician.

Then a judge.

Then a business owner.

Then an alleged informer.

Then a political opponent.

Then a person standing near the intended target becomes collateral damage.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the expanding moral perimeter of violence**.

Violence creates pressure for broader justification.

Every new category becomes precedent.

The organization begins with a narrow claim.

The practice develops a wider reality.

This is one reason violence must be judged not only by its first justification but by its institutional trajectory.

What does the method become over time?

VI. The Child as the End of Abstraction

Nothing exposes revolutionary abstraction more completely than the death of a child.

The child has no strategic responsibility.

No historical guilt.

No institutional authority.

No ideological role capable of justifying harm.

When a child is killed in political violence, every theory must become silent before the fact.

Moshe Reed Thought refuses language that turns such deaths into unfortunate necessities of struggle.

There are no revolutionary children and counterrevolutionary children.

There are children.

A political movement that cannot protect this distinction has lost contact with liberation.

VII. The Worker Killed by the Workers' Revolution

Revolutionary socialism claims to liberate workers.

Yet political violence can kill workers.

A driver.

A clerk.

A mechanic.

A construction worker.

A cleaner.

A shop employee.

A public servant.

A worker traveling home.

The contradiction is severe.

The organization may reply that individual tragedy must be understood within structural struggle.

Moshe Reed Thought answers:

Structure exists for human beings.

Human beings do not exist for structure.

A socialist movement must be judged by whether workers gain actual power over life and work.

If workers become casualties of a strategy conducted by specialists acting in their name, the movement must confront the contradiction.

The worker is not an abstract class unit.

The worker is a person.

VIII. The Apology Problem

Organizations sometimes apologize for civilian deaths.

Apology can matter.

Acknowledgment is better than denial.

But an apology does not erase responsibility.

The deeper question is whether strategy changes.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes **regret** from **repentance**.

Regret says:

We wish the consequence had not occurred.

Repentance says:

We recognize the action or method as wrong and will change.

Institutions often prefer regret because it preserves strategy.

The death is unfortunate.

The method remains.

Moshe Reed Thought demands transformation.

If the same pattern repeatedly produces civilian deaths, the strategy itself must be judged.

IX. Shared Humanity Against Political Sorting

Polarized societies sort grief.

Our dead.

Their dead.

Innocent victims.

Enemy casualties.

Martyrs.

Traitors.

Moshe Reed Thought refuses the sorting of human value.

This does not mean every person bears equal responsibility.

A perpetrator and victim are not morally identical.

But human dignity is not abolished by political category.

The purpose of justice is to identify responsibility without abandoning humanity.

The purpose of memory is to recognize victims without turning grief into tribal property.

A society cannot reconcile while mourning remains segregated.

X. The Silence of Supporters

Supporters of political movements face moral tests when their side commits wrongdoing.

The temptation is predictable.

Deny.

Minimize.

Change the subject.

Point to worse actions by the enemy.

Question the victim.

Attack the source.

Demand context only when one's own side is accused.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **factional conscience**.

Factional conscience is morality controlled by affiliation.

The same act is judged differently depending upon who performs it.

This destroys ethical credibility.

The disciplined political person must be capable of saying:

This was done by people whose broader cause I may understand, but this act was wrong.

Or:

This was done by institutions I generally support, but this act was wrong.

Moral independence is a form of political courage.

XI. Civilian Death and Strategic Defeat

Civilian casualties are not only moral catastrophes.

They can be strategic disasters.

A movement claims to represent a people.

Then people fear it.

A movement claims liberation.

Then families associate it with grief.

A movement claims political education.

Then its actions teach the public to desire security.

Violence can strengthen the very institutions it seeks to weaken.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore rejects the romantic idea that every dramatic action advances revolutionary consciousness.

Sometimes violence produces reaction.

Sometimes it produces exhaustion.

Sometimes it isolates the movement.

Sometimes it strengthens police powers.

Sometimes it turns potential sympathizers into opponents.

History is not obligated to reward militancy.

XII. The Right to Ordinary Life

Revolutionary politics often treats ordinary life as insufficient.

The worker goes to work.

The family shops.

Children attend school.

People watch sports.

Neighbors talk.

The revolutionary sees passivity.

Moshe Reed Thought sees something else.

Ordinary life is what politics exists to protect and enrich.

The purpose of liberation is not permanent mobilization.

It is the creation of conditions in which people can live meaningful lives without domination.

A society permanently organized around conflict has not yet achieved liberation.

The right to ordinary life is revolutionary because systems of domination repeatedly sacrifice ordinary people to grand projects.

The commonwealth exists for life.

Life does not exist for the commonwealth.

XIII. Memory Without Weaponization

Victims must be remembered.

Names matter.

Stories matter.

Public memorials matter.

Historical education matters.

But memory can be weaponized.

One death is used to justify another.

One massacre becomes a permanent political resource.

One generation inherits an obligation to hate.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes **reconciliatory memory**.

Reconciliatory memory does not forget.

It does not create false equivalence.

It does not erase responsibility.

It remembers in order to interrupt repetition.

The question is not:

How can this death strengthen our side?

The question is:

How can this death teach us to prevent another?

XIV. The Moral Collapse of Substitutionism

Civilian casualties reveal the final contradiction of substitutionism.

The organization says:

We act for the people.

The people suffer from the action.

The organization replies:

The suffering is necessary for the people's liberation.

At this moment, the people have been transformed from subjects into material.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this completely.

No vanguard possesses ownership of the future.

No organization can sacrifice unwilling people to a historical destiny those people did not authorize.

Liberation must increase agency.

It cannot treat human beings as fuel.

XV. Toward the Social Cost of Fear

Civilian death is the most visible consequence of political violence.

But conflict produces other injuries that are harder to count.

Fear.

Silence.

Exile.

Self-censorship.

Political isolation.

Broken friendships.

Suspicion between neighbors.

Children inheriting conflict narratives.

Communities divided by memory.

Journalists calculating danger.

Politicians living under threat.

Families hiding opinions.

The next chapter examines this wider social environment.

It moves beyond the attack itself to study the atmosphere created by prolonged violence.

Moshe Reed Thought asks:

What happens to a society when fear becomes ordinary, silence becomes strategic, and people begin organizing daily life around the possibility of political danger?

The answer reveals that violence is not limited to the moment of explosion or assassination.

Violence can become climate.

And a political climate of fear can survive long after the weapon has become silent.

Chapter 17

The Social Cost of Fear

Violence does not exist only at the moment of attack.

Its influence travels outward.

A person is threatened.

A family changes its routines.

A politician receives protection.

A journalist avoids a subject.

A business owner pays rather than risk refusal.

A neighbor becomes careful about political conversation.

A teacher chooses words cautiously.

A public official resigns.

A family moves away.

A child learns that certain topics should not be discussed outside the home.

None of these experiences appears in a simple count of deaths.

Yet together they form the social architecture of fear.

During the long conflict involving Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, violence, threats, state repression, counterterrorist abuses, political polarization, and competing memories affected Basque and Spanish society in ways extending far beyond direct casualties.

Different people experienced fear from different directions.

Some feared ETA.

Some feared police abuse.

Some feared being accused of collaboration.

Some feared being politically identified.

Some feared speaking about prisoners.

Some feared speaking against violence.

Some feared social isolation.

Some feared physical attack.

The sources and degrees of fear were not identical.

They should not be collapsed into false equivalence.

But Moshe Reed Thought insists upon a universal principle:

A society cannot call itself free when people must calculate personal danger before expressing ordinary political disagreement.

Fear is not merely an emotion.

Under prolonged conflict, fear becomes an institution without a building.

I. The Geography of Fear

Fear changes space.

A street is no longer merely a street.

A café is no longer merely a café.

A political office becomes a potential target.

A parked vehicle becomes suspicious.

A public event requires security planning.

A home address becomes sensitive information.

A border crossing acquires political meaning.

A prison visit becomes part of family life.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the political occupation of ordinary space**.

The conflict enters places that were not created for conflict.

The result is psychological enclosure.

People continue living.

They work.

Shop.

Travel.

Attend school.

Raise families.

But ordinary activity contains additional calculations.

The cost of conflict is therefore not only what is destroyed.

It is also the freedom of movement, speech, association, and trust that gradually contracts.

II. Silence as Survival

Silence can have many meanings.

Support.

Opposition.

Uncertainty.

Exhaustion.

Fear.

In polarized societies, political actors frequently interpret silence as agreement.

The armed movement may claim that the silent majority secretly supports the cause.

The state may claim that silence demonstrates public rejection of militants.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects both assumptions.

Where fear exists, silence cannot be treated as reliable consent.

A person may remain silent because speaking has consequences.

The consequence may be physical.

Professional.

Social.

Familial.

Legal.

Political.

The right to speak is not meaningful if the social cost of speaking becomes unbearable.

A healthy political community must protect disagreement not only formally but culturally.

III. The Family Under Threat

Political conflict enters families.

A parent worries about a child involved in activism.

A spouse worries about an official living under threat.

A family travels to visit a prisoner.

A child grows up with security routines.

A household receives a threatening communication.

A family member refuses to discuss politics at gatherings.

The family becomes a secondary battlefield.

Moshe Reed Thought places great importance upon the household because political theory often ignores domestic consequences.

The organization speaks of national liberation.

The state speaks of security.

The family asks:

Will this person come home?

The household perspective restores proportion.

A political strategy that appears heroic in a manifesto may look very different at a kitchen table.

IV. The Politician as Human Target

Political violence transforms public service.

A local councilor is no longer simply a participant in civic life.

The person may require security.

Travel patterns change.

Family members become anxious.

Public events become dangerous.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the idea that holding political office removes human dignity.

A politician can be criticized.

Defeated electorally.

Investigated.

Protested.

Removed through lawful procedures.

Political disagreement does not create ownership over the opponent's life.

This principle is essential because democracy requires people willing to participate publicly.

If entering politics means accepting the possibility of assassination, political life narrows.

Fear selects who can participate.

The brave remain.

The cautious leave.

Families pressure loved ones to withdraw.

Democracy loses voices.

V. The Journalist and the Boundary of Speech

Journalists are essential in conflict because they investigate competing claims.

They document victims.

Question officials.

Expose abuse.

Interview controversial figures.

Examine organizations.

But journalists can face pressure from multiple directions.

The state may demand loyalty.

Movements may demand sympathetic framing.

Audiences may accuse reporters of betrayal.

Threats can produce self-censorship.

Moshe Reed Thought defends the journalist's right to investigate all power.

State power.

Corporate power.

Revolutionary power.

Religious power.

Party power.

No institution should possess immunity from scrutiny.

A movement claiming liberation should not fear questions.

A state claiming democracy should not fear investigation.

VI. The Business Owner and the Letter

The political economy of fear reaches the workplace.

A financial demand arrives.

The recipient must decide whether to pay.

The decision affects more than money.

Family safety enters the calculation.

Employees enter the calculation.

The future of the business enters the calculation.

Political belief becomes secondary to survival.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes again:

Payment under threat cannot be interpreted as support.

Compliance is not consent.

This distinction applies throughout political life.

A person who obeys under fear has not necessarily been persuaded.

A quiet society may not be a peaceful society.

Peace requires the reduction of fear, not merely the reduction of visible resistance.

VII. The Prisoner's Family

Conflict also places burdens upon families of prisoners.

They may travel long distances.

Experience social stigma.

Live with uncertainty.

Become politically active through the experience of imprisonment.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that families should not be treated as extensions of organizations.

Responsibility is individual.

A parent is not guilty because of a child's actions.

A child is not responsible for a parent's actions.

A spouse is not a political category.

Collective suspicion damages social trust.

The principle of individual responsibility must apply consistently.

VIII. The Fear of the Police

A complete account of fear must also include fear of state institutions.

Where allegations of abuse, torture, unlawful detention practices, or dirty-war violence have credibility, communities can develop deep mistrust.

A person may fear arrest even when politically uninvolved.

Families may distrust official investigations.

Witnesses may hesitate to cooperate.

Moshe Reed Thought sees this as catastrophic for democratic legitimacy.

Police power depends ultimately upon public trust.

A security institution feared as arbitrary cannot effectively serve as a common institution.

Reform, oversight, accountability, transparency, and lawful conduct are therefore not obstacles to security.

They are foundations of legitimate security.

IX. Children Inherit Atmospheres

Children learn conflict before they understand ideology.

They hear adults lower their voices.

They see security measures.

They notice absences.

They attend funerals.

They learn which symbols belong to which side.

They inherit stories.

The stories may contain truth.

They may also contain selective memory.

Moshe Reed Thought warns against inherited hatred.

Historical education should teach complexity.

Children should learn about dictatorship.

Cultural repression.

Political violence.

State abuses.

Victims.

Democratic transition.

Competing political goals.

But they should not inherit an obligation to continue the emotional war of previous generations.

Memory should create wisdom.

Not hereditary enemies.

X. Social Exile

Not every exile crosses a border.

Some people become strangers in their own communities.

A person holds an unpopular political view.

Friends stop speaking.

Neighbors become distant.

The workplace becomes uncomfortable.

The person avoids local events.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **social exile**.

Social exile can occur in any ideological direction.

A nationalist can experience hostility in one environment.

A critic of nationalism can experience hostility in another.

A former militant can be rejected by former comrades.

A victim can feel ignored when their story does not fit the dominant local narrative.

A healthy commonwealth must create room for complicated people.

No society is healed by replacing one enforced silence with another.

XI. The Ritual of Checking

Long-term fear creates habits.

Looking beneath a vehicle.

Changing routes.

Watching unfamiliar faces.

Avoiding predictable schedules.

Checking communications.

Planning exits.

These habits may be rational responses to danger.

But they reshape the nervous system of society.

Even when the immediate threat declines, habits can remain.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes that peace is therefore more than ceasefire.

The weapon can become silent before fear becomes silent.

Social healing requires time.

Truth.

Recognition.

Accountability.

Public safety.

Human contact across political boundaries.

The reconstruction of trust is slower than the destruction of trust.

XII. Polarization and the Death of Friendship

Political conflict can destroy friendships.

People begin evaluating one another according to camps.

What do you think about the prisoners?

What do you think about independence?

What do you think about the police?

What do you think about ETA?

Every answer becomes a loyalty test.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects loyalty-test politics.

Human relationships should not require total ideological agreement.

A democratic culture must allow friendship across disagreement.

This does not mean moral indifference.

Some actions require condemnation.

But people are larger than political categories.

The recovery of ordinary friendship is one of the quiet forms of peace.

XIII. The Social Cost Cannot Be Counted Completely

Historians can count deaths.

They can count attacks.

They can count prisoners.

They can study elections.

But the total cost of fear cannot be fully measured.

How many conversations never occurred?

How many people left?

How many careers changed?

How many families remained silent?

How many children absorbed anxiety?

How many friendships ended?

How many political ideas were never expressed?

How many people supported something publicly that they doubted privately?

Moshe Reed Thought calls these **the invisible casualties of coercive politics**.

They are not equivalent to death or physical injury.

But they matter.

Freedom is not only survival.

It is the ability to live without organizing one's personality around fear.

XIV. The Reconstruction of Civic Courage

When fear has shaped society, peace requires civic courage.

The courage to speak.

The courage to listen.

The courage to condemn wrongdoing by one's own side.

The courage to acknowledge another person's suffering.

The courage to participate in ordinary institutions.

The courage to abandon heroic hatred.

Moshe Reed Thought considers civic courage more important than militant courage.

Militant courage faces physical danger.

Civic courage faces the possibility of losing identity, belonging, and certainty.

It asks a person to say:

My side was not always right.

The other side's victim was still a victim.

My enemy may have a legitimate grievance.

My grievance does not justify every action.

Peace requires this complexity.

XV. From Fear to Negotiation

A society cannot remain permanently inside fear.

Eventually, the question changes.

Not:

Who can defeat whom?

But:

How does this end?

The armed organization may discover that military victory is impossible.

The state may discover that policing alone cannot resolve the political environment.

The public may become exhausted.

Victims demand recognition.

Prisoners remain a political issue.

Political movements search for alternatives.

Secret contacts may begin.

Ceasefires become possible.

Negotiations emerge.

But negotiation creates its own dangers.

Who speaks for whom?

Can an armed organization negotiate on behalf of a population?

What should be negotiated?

Prisoner policy?

Disarmament?

Political reforms?

Constitutional questions?

Can violence obtain political concessions unavailable through democratic participation?

How can a state negotiate without rewarding coercion?

How can peace be made without humiliating people whose cooperation is necessary?

The next chapter examines negotiation, ceasefire, and the political ethics of ending armed conflict.

Moshe Reed Thought begins with one principle:

Talking to an enemy is not surrender.

But neither is negotiation a substitute for democratic consent.

Peace requires dialogue.

Freedom requires that the future belong to the people rather than to armed organizations or secret institutions negotiating over their heads.

Chapter 18

Negotiation, Ceasefire, and the Ethics of Ending Conflict

Every long conflict eventually confronts a question that its mythology has postponed:

How does this end?

Revolutionary organizations often begin with the language of victory.

The enemy will be defeated.

The state will collapse.

The nation will be liberated.

The revolution will triumph.

Governments use similar language.

Terrorism will be eliminated.

The organization will be destroyed.

The criminals will be defeated.

There will be no negotiation.

Yet prolonged conflicts rarely end exactly as either side imagined at the beginning.

Organizations fragment.

Political conditions change.

Generations change.

Public support changes.

Security pressure changes.

International conditions change.

Prison populations create new political questions.

Victims demand recognition.

Communities become exhausted.

New political institutions emerge.

The impossible conversation becomes possible.

Negotiation is often condemned by people farthest from the consequences of continued conflict.

To speak with an enemy appears dishonorable.

But refusing to speak can also become a form of moral vanity when ordinary people bear the cost.

Moshe Reed Thought begins from a practical principle:

Dialogue is not surrender.

To speak with an opponent does not mean accepting the opponent's ideology.

To negotiate a ceasefire does not mean declaring past violence justified.

To discuss prisoner issues does not mean erasing victims.

To seek disarmament does not mean accepting every political demand of the armed organization.

But Moshe Reed Thought adds a second principle:

No armed organization has the right to negotiate away the democratic agency of the population it claims to represent.

Peace may require negotiation between adversaries.

The political future must remain subject to public participation.

I. Why Negotiation Becomes Necessary

Negotiation often begins when certainty weakens.

The armed organization realizes that military victory is unlikely.

The state realizes that security measures alone will not produce a complete political resolution.

The public becomes exhausted.

Political allies demand change.

International pressure develops.

Internal debates intensify.

The cost of continuation becomes greater than the symbolic cost of talking.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the idea that negotiation must wait until all sides trust one another.

If trust already existed, negotiation would be easier.

Negotiation exists because trust is absent.

The process must therefore create mechanisms stronger than goodwill.

Verification.

Timelines.

Clear commitments.

Public accountability where possible.

Independent observation when appropriate.

Legal procedures.

Political transparency.

Peace cannot depend entirely upon private promises between people who have spent years treating one another as enemies.

II. The Ceasefire as Moral Interruption

A ceasefire is more than a strategic pause.

It can be a moral interruption.

For the first time, the expected next death does not occur.

The expected retaliation is delayed.

Families experience a different possibility.

Public conversation changes.

The political imagination expands.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the interruption of inevitability**.

Long conflicts teach people to believe that violence is natural.

One attack follows another.

One arrest follows another.

One funeral follows another.

The ceasefire demonstrates that the sequence is not a law of nature.

People are making decisions.

Different decisions are possible.

This realization is politically powerful.

III. The Problem of Tactical Ceasefires

Not every ceasefire represents genuine transformation.

An armed organization may use a pause to reorganize.

A government may use negotiations to gather intelligence or divide opponents.

Both sides may enter dialogue primarily for public relations.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore distinguishes between **instrumental pause** and **transformative cessation**.

An instrumental pause asks:

How can this period improve our position in the conflict?

A transformative cessation asks:

How can we leave the logic of the conflict?

The distinction becomes visible through behavior.

Does threatening language decrease?

Are channels of communication sustained?

Are attacks genuinely stopped?

Are preparations made for disarmament?

Are victims treated seriously?

Are political disagreements moved into public institutions?

The credibility of peace is built through repeated conduct.

IV. Who Has the Authority to Negotiate?

This question is difficult.

An armed organization can negotiate matters directly connected to its own actions.

Ceasefire.

Disarmament.

Dissolution.

The status of organizational structures.

Mechanisms for ending clandestine activity.

Governments can negotiate security arrangements and lawful procedures within their authority.

But can an armed organization negotiate constitutional sovereignty on behalf of an entire people?

Moshe Reed Thought says no.

It can advocate.

It can participate politically after abandoning violence.

It can propose constitutional change.

But the future of a population belongs to the population.

A secret organization cannot exchange weapons for political authority over people who did not elect it.

This is a crucial distinction between peace negotiation and political substitution.

V. The State's Dilemma

Governments face a difficult problem.

If they negotiate, critics may say violence has been rewarded.

If they refuse all communication, opportunities for peace may be lost.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects theatrical absolutism.

A state can maintain legal principles while communicating with violent adversaries.

Communication is a tool.

The moral question is what is agreed.

A government should not secretly surrender the democratic rights of citizens.

But neither should it prolong conflict merely to preserve an image of toughness.

Political leadership requires judgment.

The slogan “we never negotiate” is often contradicted by history.

States communicate with enemies because the alternative can be continued death.

The ethical question is not whether communication occurs.

It is whether the process serves peace, law, and democratic agency.

VI. Victims and Negotiation

Victims often experience peace processes ambivalently.

They may desire an end to violence.

They may also fear that their suffering will be forgotten.

A negotiation focused entirely upon armed actors can create the impression that violence grants political importance.

The victim becomes a spectator while the perpetrator enters negotiation.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that peace processes must include meaningful recognition of victims.

This does not mean every victim controls political outcomes.

Victims hold diverse political views.

But truth, memory, justice, and acknowledgment cannot be treated as obstacles to peace.

A peace built upon forced forgetting is fragile.

VII. Prisoners and the End of Conflict

Prisoner questions are among the most difficult issues in the ending of armed conflicts.

The state emphasizes individual criminal responsibility.

The movement emphasizes political context and collective identity.

Families emphasize human relationships.

Moshe Reed Thought begins with individual dignity and responsibility.

Prisoners must be treated humanely.

Torture and abuse are unacceptable.

Family relationships matter.

At the same time, the political nature of a conflict does not automatically erase responsibility for serious crimes.

A mature peace process must resist two extremes.

The first says:

Nothing can ever change because punishment must continue exactly as before.

The second says:

All responsibility disappears because the conflict was political.

Neither is sufficient.

Justice and peace must be brought into relationship.

VIII. The Fear of Betrayal

Negotiation creates accusations of betrayal.

Hardliners say the organization is surrendering.

Victims' advocates may fear impunity.

State security institutions may distrust political leadership.

Moderates may fear being outflanked.

Prisoners may fear abandonment.

Families may fear renewed conflict.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **the crisis of constituency**.

Negotiators do not speak only to one another.

They speak to their own supporters.

A leader may understand that compromise is necessary but fear losing legitimacy.

This is why peace requires political education.

Supporters must be prepared for the fact that negotiation means the other side also exists.

No negotiated settlement gives one side everything.

If one side receives everything, the process is not negotiation.

It is surrender.

IX. The Courage to Stop

Revolutionary mythology celebrates the courage to begin fighting.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes the courage to stop.

Stopping can be psychologically harder.

The militant must reconsider identity.

The prisoner may wonder what sacrifice meant.

The family of a dead member may feel confused.

The supporter may feel abandoned.

The organization must admit that its method has reached an end.

This does not require denying every original grievance.

A person can say:

The grievance was real.

The dictatorship was real.

The cultural repression was real.

State abuses were real.

The national question remains politically debatable.

And armed violence must end.

These statements can coexist.

X. Disarmament and Symbolism

Weapons possess symbolic meaning.

They represent resistance.

Sacrifice.

Power.

Defiance.

For the state, disarmament demonstrates the restoration of lawful authority.

For the armed organization, surrendering weapons can feel like humiliation.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects humiliation as a foundation for peace.

The objective is not to create a theatrical image of one side kneeling.

The objective is to remove weapons from political decision-making.

Disarmament should be real.

Verifiable.

Irreversible in practical terms.

But peace does not require ritual degradation.

A humiliated opponent may become a future enemy.

A transformed opponent can become a political participant.

XI. From Armed Actor to Political Actor

The transition from clandestine organization to peaceful political participation requires more than putting away weapons.

The political culture must change.

Command must become persuasion.

Secrecy must become public argument.

Discipline must become voluntary association.

The enemy must become an opponent.

The target must become a voter.

The organization must learn to lose.

This last point is essential.

Moshe Reed Thought defines democratic maturity as the ability to lose without reaching for coercion.

A party campaigns.

It loses.

It reorganizes.

It persuades.

It campaigns again.

An armed organization is trained in a different logic.

Defeat invites escalation.

The transformation is therefore institutional and psychological.

XII. Peace Is Not Agreement

A peaceful society is not one in which everyone agrees.

Basque independence can remain a political goal.

Spanish constitutional unity can remain a political goal.

Socialism can remain a political goal.

Capitalism can be defended.

Autonomy can be expanded.

Federalism can be proposed.

Confederal arrangements can be debated.

Moshe Reed Thought does not demand ideological consensus.

It demands the removal of coercive violence from political competition.

Peace means disagreement without assassination.

Debate without bombing.

Protest without torture.

Policing without secret death squads.

Independence advocacy without intimidation.

Unionism without repression.

The purpose of peace is not to end politics.

It is to make politics possible.

XIII. The Spoiler Problem

Peace processes can be disrupted by those who benefit from continuation.

Hardline factions.

Institutional interests.

Political entrepreneurs.

Extremists who believe compromise is betrayal.

People whose identities depend upon conflict.

Moshe Reed Thought calls these actors **guardians of permanent emergency**.

They exist in states and movements.

The security official whose authority expands during conflict.

The militant whose identity depends upon clandestine struggle.

The politician whose career depends upon fear.

The commentator whose audience depends upon outrage.

Peace threatens all institutions built around permanent emergency.

Therefore, peace must create alternative forms of meaning and participation.

Former militants need paths into ordinary life.

Communities need civic institutions.

Victims need recognition.

Political movements need peaceful channels.

Young people need futures larger than inherited conflict.

XIV. Negotiation Without Myth

Peace negotiations are often surrounded by mythology.

Secret heroes.

Historic handshakes.

Dramatic declarations.

Moshe Reed Thought prefers institutional analysis.

Were attacks stopped?

Were weapons removed from political life?

Were victims recognized?

Were unlawful state practices investigated?

Were political freedoms protected?

Could all peaceful political positions organize?

Did communities become safer?

Could people speak without fear?

These are the measures of peace.

The purpose of negotiation is not the photograph.

It is the ordinary morning afterward.

XV. Toward the End of Armed Activity

For decades, ETA's history was shaped by failed talks, temporary ceasefires, renewed violence, political pressure, policing, internal debate, and changing social attitudes.

Eventually, the organization's armed campaign approached its end.

This ending did not arrive as the triumphant revolutionary victory imagined in earlier decades.

Nor did it erase the political existence of Basque nationalism.

The national question remained part of democratic politics.

The decisive transformation was different.

The weapon lost its claimed authority over political life.

Chapter 19

The End of Armed Activity

Every armed movement imagines its ending differently from how history usually delivers it.

At the beginning, the ending is imagined as victory.

The flag raised.

The homeland liberated.

The enemy defeated.

The revolution completed.

The people celebrating.

History confirms the movement.

Reality is often less dramatic.

Conflicts end through exhaustion.

Changing political conditions.

Generational change.

Strategic failure.

Negotiation.

Loss of public support.

Institutional transformation.

International pressure.

Internal debate.

Recognition that continued violence no longer advances the stated cause.

For Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, the final phase did not arrive through military triumph over the Spanish state.

Nor did it arrive because the underlying political questions disappeared.

Questions concerning Basque identity, autonomy, sovereignty, language, memory, and constitutional reform continued to exist within democratic politics.

What ended was the organization's conclusion that armed struggle should remain the means of pursuing those questions.

ETA announced a definitive end to its armed activity in 2011, later proceeded through a process of disarmament, and formally dissolved the organization in 2018.

For Moshe Reed Thought, this distinction is essential.

A political question can remain unresolved while a method becomes exhausted.

The end of violence is not the end of politics.

It is the return of politics.

I. The Difference Between Defeat and Transformation

Organizations often fear ending violence because they equate stopping with surrender.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this assumption.

There are several ways an armed movement can end.

Military destruction.

Political collapse.

Internal fragmentation.

Absorption into legal politics.

Strategic reassessment.

Voluntary dissolution.

Each carries different meanings.

Ending violence is not automatically equivalent to admitting that every grievance was false.

A movement may conclude that legitimate political objectives should continue through democratic means.

The transformation lies not in abandoning every conviction.

It lies in abandoning coercive methods.

This distinction allows political continuity without violent continuity.

II. The Long Erosion of Armed Legitimacy

The legitimacy of armed struggle does not disappear overnight.

It erodes.

Public opinion changes.

Generations without memory of dictatorship grow older.

Regional institutions become ordinary.

Democratic participation expands.

Communities become weary of funerals.

Families grow tired of fear.

Supporters begin asking different questions.

The organization itself experiences debate.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **historical exhaustion**.

Historical exhaustion does not mean people stop caring.

It means the old method no longer appears capable of producing the desired future.

When this realization spreads through society, the symbolic power of violence weakens.

Weapons begin to appear as reminders of the past rather than instruments of tomorrow.

III. The End of the Vanguard

One of the deepest transformations concerns representation.

For decades, ETA claimed to embody a revolutionary vanguard.

It acted in the name of the Basque people while remaining a clandestine organization.

As democratic political participation expanded, this claim became increasingly difficult to sustain.

The Basque people expressed themselves through elections.

Political parties.

Trade unions.

Community organizations.

Cultural institutions.

Municipal governments.

Civil society.

The organization no longer possessed a convincing claim that it alone represented the nation.

Moshe Reed Thought regards this as a healthy political development.

The people ceased to exist primarily as an abstraction invoked by an armed minority.

They increasingly appeared as actual citizens with differing political opinions.

Plurality replaced substitution.

IV. Disarmament as Political Symbol

Weapons are physical objects.

They are also symbols.

As long as weapons remain organized for political use, they communicate the possibility of renewed coercion.

Disarmament therefore possesses practical and symbolic importance.

Moshe Reed Thought argues that genuine disarmament communicates three ideas.

First, violence will no longer determine political disagreement.

Second, persuasion replaces coercion.

Third, future generations should not inherit armed structures as ordinary political institutions.

Disarmament is not merely about metal.

It is about authority.

The organization relinquishes the claim that weapons provide superior political legitimacy.

V. Dissolution and Institutional Humility

Institutions rarely dissolve voluntarily.

Most attempt to survive.

Political parties seek votes.

Corporations seek markets.

Bureaucracies seek budgets.

Religious organizations seek members.

Armed organizations seek continued relevance.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore considers voluntary dissolution an unusual act of institutional humility.

An organization acknowledges that its historical role has ended.

This does not erase its history.

It does not erase suffering.

It does not erase disagreement.

It recognizes that institutions exist to serve human beings.

They are not entitled to permanent existence.

Every institution should eventually be capable of asking:

Are we still necessary?

If the honest answer becomes no, dissolution may become an ethical achievement rather than a failure.

VI. The Political Future Without Weapons

The disappearance of armed struggle does not settle constitutional questions.

Supporters of Basque independence remained free to organize peacefully.

Supporters of greater autonomy remained free to campaign.

Unionists remained free to defend continued constitutional unity.

Socialists, conservatives, liberals, environmentalists, and others continued participating in public life.

This is precisely what Moshe Reed Thought means by the return of politics.

Conflict did not disappear.

Violence as the organizing principle declined.

Political disagreement became institutional rather than military.

This is not perfection.

It is progress.

VII. The Responsibility of the State After Victory

The end of armed activity also tests the state.

A government may be tempted to interpret the end of violence as complete moral vindication.

Moshe Reed Thought warns against triumphalism.

A democratic state must still confront its own history.

Credible allegations of torture.

Unlawful policing.

The GAL affair.

Failures of accountability.

The treatment of prisoners.

Institutional reform.

Victory over armed violence does not erase responsibility for unlawful state conduct.

Democratic maturity requires self-examination after success as well as after failure.

VIII. The Responsibility of Former Militants

The end of armed struggle also places responsibilities upon former members.

Memory.

Truth.

Acknowledgment.

Participation in peaceful politics.

Respect for victims.

Acceptance that future generations should not inherit the same methods.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects collective humiliation.

Former militants remain human beings capable of moral growth.

The objective is not permanent exclusion.

It is transformation.

A democratic society should create lawful paths for reintegration while maintaining individual accountability for serious crimes.

Justice and reintegration need not be enemies.

IX. Victims After Violence

The end of violence does not end grief.

Families continue living with absence.

Children become adults without parents.

Parents grow old without children.

Communities retain memory.

Peace therefore cannot be measured only by the absence of attacks.

It must also ask:

How are victims remembered?

Are they acknowledged honestly?

Are their stories reduced to political symbols?

Do institutions support them?

Does education preserve historical truth without encouraging inherited hatred?

Moshe Reed Thought insists that remembrance should protect dignity rather than mobilize future conflict.

Memory belongs to the living.

Vengeance belongs to the past.

X. The Danger of Historical Simplicity

When conflicts end, societies often seek simple narratives.

One side was entirely righteous.

The other entirely evil.

History becomes morally comfortable.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects comforting history.

The Franco dictatorship involved genuine authoritarian repression.

Basque cultural suppression was real.

ETA committed assassinations, bombings, extortion, and intimidation.

GAL represented unlawful state violence.

Many ordinary people rejected both ETA and state abuses simultaneously.

Victims existed across different political identities.

A truthful history is more complicated than propaganda.

Complexity is not moral confusion.

It is fidelity to reality.

XI. The Young Generation

The generation that inherits peace faces a different challenge from the generation that experienced conflict.

They may know violence only through books, family stories, documentaries, and memorials.

This creates opportunity.

It also creates responsibility.

Moshe Reed Thought argues that education should teach:

How authoritarianism developed.

Why Basque nationalism emerged.

How ETA formed.

Why some people supported it.

Why many opposed it.

How state abuses damaged legitimacy.

Why armed struggle ultimately ended.

How democratic politics continued.

The purpose is understanding.

Not recruitment.

Not forgetting.

Not inherited hostility.

XII. The Difference Between Ending Violence and Ending Justice

Ending armed struggle does not mean abandoning justice.

Communities may still debate constitutional reform.

Language policy.

Economic inequality.

Regional autonomy.

Historical memory.

Prison policy.

Police accountability.

Worker ownership.

Municipal democracy.

The commonwealth continues building itself through institutions.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the false dilemma between violence and resignation.

There exists a third path:

Persistent democratic transformation.

This path is slower.

Less dramatic.

Less cinematic.

It is also more durable.

XIII. The Final Failure of Permanent Emergency

ETA's history illustrates the danger of permanent emergency.

Organizations created for exceptional circumstances may continue acting as though the exception never ends.

The same danger exists within states.

Emergency legislation.

Expanded surveillance.

Exceptional policing.

Special institutions.

Permanent emergency weakens democratic life.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore argues that every exceptional measure should contain an expectation of ending.

A society cannot remain healthy while permanently organized around extraordinary conditions.

Normal civic life must eventually return.

XIV. The Commonwealth Beyond Conflict

The end of armed activity opens space for construction.

Worker cooperatives.

Regional democratic institutions.

Cultural revival.

Language education.

Historical scholarship.

Community reconciliation.

Local self-government.

Participatory budgeting.

Independent journalism.

Public accountability.

These institutions rarely receive the same attention as explosions.

Yet they determine whether peace becomes ordinary life.

Moshe Reed Thought measures political success not by dramatic confrontation but by the everyday expansion of human freedom.

Can people speak openly?

Can they organize peacefully?

Can communities govern themselves?

Can workers participate in economic life?

Can children inherit schools instead of slogans?

These questions reveal whether liberation has substance.

XV. The Last Weapon

The last weapon surrendered is not the rifle.

It is certainty.

The certainty that only one organization represents the people.

The certainty that violence possesses unique political wisdom.

The certainty that enemies cannot become opponents.

The certainty that history authorizes every sacrifice.

Moshe Reed Thought ends its study of ETA with a final observation.

The Basque question did not disappear.

Political disagreement did not disappear.

Memory did not disappear.

What changed was the recognition that these questions belonged within the public life of a democratic society rather than the authority of clandestine violence.

The greatest victory over political violence is not the destruction of an enemy.

It is the restoration of ordinary politics.

When citizens rather than armed organizations become the authors of the future, history moves from coercion toward commonwealth.

That transition remains incomplete in every society.

It is also one of civilization's most important achievements.

Chapter 20

Lessons for the Future: ETA Through Moshe Reed Thought

History is most useful when it becomes more than a courtroom.

A courtroom asks:

Who is guilty?

History must ask that question.

But history must also ask:

Why did this happen?

What conditions produced it?

Why did people believe in it?

How did institutions change?

What alternatives existed?

Why were those alternatives rejected?

What can prevent repetition?

The history of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna cannot be reduced to a single sentence.

ETA emerged within a specific historical environment shaped by Basque nationalism, cultural conflict, the memory of war, authoritarian centralization, the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, revolutionary ideology, generational rebellion, and international currents of anti-colonial and socialist struggle.

The organization changed over time.

The political world around it changed.

Spain moved from dictatorship through democratic transition.

Basque autonomy developed.

Legal political space expanded.

The organization nevertheless continued armed violence.

The conflict produced deaths, injuries, imprisonment, fear, extortion, exile, polarization, and competing memories.

The Spanish state, while confronting ETA, also experienced serious episodes of unlawful conduct, including the dirty war associated with GAL and allegations and documented cases of abuse that damaged institutional legitimacy.

Eventually, ETA ended its armed activity, disarmed, and dissolved.

The political questions surrounding Basque identity and sovereignty remained within democratic life.

For Moshe Reed Thought, the central lesson is neither that resistance is always wrong nor that states are always legitimate.

The lesson is more demanding:

No institution possesses moral immunity.

Not the state.

Not the revolutionary organization.

Not the party.

Not the church.

Not the corporation.

Not the nation.

Not the majority.

Not the minority.

Every form of power must answer to human dignity, democratic participation, material justice, and the freedom of people to refuse domination.

I. Grievance Is Not Permission

A movement can emerge from genuine injustice.

This matters.

Historical understanding requires recognizing grievances honestly.

Cultural repression can be real.

Political exclusion can be real.

Economic exploitation can be real.

Police abuse can be real.

National domination can be real.

But Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes explanation from permission.

A genuine grievance explains why resistance emerges.

It does not justify every method adopted by those who resist.

This principle protects political analysis from two opposite errors.

The first error says:

Because the movement used wrongful methods, the grievance was imaginary.

The second says:

Because the grievance was real, the movement's methods were justified.

Both are false.

A person can defend Basque cultural rights while condemning assassination.

A person can defend the right to advocate independence while rejecting extortion.

A person can condemn ETA violence while condemning torture.

A person can support constitutional order while demanding accountability for unlawful state action.

Moral maturity begins when political thought becomes capable of holding several truths at once.

II. The Nation Must Never Become an Idol

National identity can preserve memory.

Language.

Community.

Solidarity.

Historical continuity.

A sense of responsibility toward place.

Moshe Reed Thought does not dismiss nationalism as meaningless.

But the nation becomes dangerous when it becomes sacred.

Once the nation is treated as an absolute, human beings can be sacrificed to it.

The dissenter becomes a traitor.

The migrant becomes contamination.

The moderate becomes a collaborator.

The minority becomes an obstacle.

The individual becomes material for national destiny.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore subordinates the nation to the person and the commonwealth.

The nation exists for human flourishing.

Human beings do not exist as fuel for the nation.

A healthy national culture invites participation.

It does not demand blood.

III. The State Must Never Become an Idol

The same warning applies to the state.

Order is necessary.

Law matters.

Public institutions matter.

Security matters.

But the state becomes dangerous when its own preservation becomes the highest value.

Then torture becomes security.

Secrecy becomes necessity.

Surveillance becomes normal.

Unlawful violence becomes patriotism.

Criticism becomes disloyalty.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects state worship.

A state is an instrument of public coordination.

It must remain accountable to law and human dignity.

The state does not become innocent because its enemy commits terrorism.

The enemy's crime does not purify the government.

Power remains responsible for its own actions.

IV. The Vanguard Cannot Replace the People

ETA's history demonstrates the danger of substitutionism.

The organization claims to act for the people.

The people become increasingly diverse in their political choices.

The organization continues acting.

The organization explains that the people do not yet fully understand their interests.

At this moment, representation has become guardianship.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects every politics in which a minority claims permanent authority to interpret the true will of the majority.

The party cannot replace the class.

The armed organization cannot replace the nation.

The bureaucracy cannot replace the public.

The leader cannot replace the movement.

The priest cannot replace conscience.

The corporation cannot replace the community.

Institutions are instruments.

People are subjects.

V. Means Become Institutions

One of the most important lessons of this history is that methods do not remain external tools.

Methods reshape organizations.

Secrecy creates information hierarchy.

Violence creates discipline.

Clandestinity creates suspicion.

Extortion creates relationships of fear.

Retaliation creates organizational memory.

Prison creates martyr narratives.

The method enters the institution.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore rejects the statement:

We will use authoritarian methods now and create freedom later.

The methods used in struggle train the people who may later govern.

A command organization produces commanders.

A secret organization produces secrecy.

A violent organization produces expertise in violence.

A democratic society must be practiced before victory.

VI. The Enemy Can Become Your Teacher

Conflict creates imitation.

The armed organization opposes the state but develops shadow sovereignty.

The state opposes clandestine violence but develops clandestine counterviolence.

Each side learns from the other.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this reciprocal degradation.

The enemy becomes the model.

This is one of the deepest dangers of prolonged conflict.

The revolutionary says:

Because the state is violent, we must become violent.

The state says:

Because the organization ignores law, we must operate beyond law.

Both surrender moral independence.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes a different principle:

Never allow the wrongdoing of an enemy to determine the limits of your own morality.

VII. Fear Is Not Consent

A society shaped by violence develops silence.

But silence is ambiguous.

It may mean agreement.

It may mean exhaustion.

It may mean fear.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore rejects political claims based upon coerced quiet.

A payment under threat is not support.

Silence under intimidation is not agreement.

Obedience under torture is not legitimacy.

Voting under repression is not democracy.

A political movement must permit visible opposition.

A state must permit lawful dissent.

A workplace must permit worker organization.

A church must permit departure.

The ability to say no is one of the clearest measures of freedom.

VIII. Democracy Is More Than Elections, but Elections Matter

Moshe Reed Thought criticizes shallow democracy.

Voting alone does not eliminate economic domination.

A worker may vote every few years while having no voice for most waking hours at work.

A tenant may vote while lacking meaningful power over housing conditions.

A community may vote while capital decisions are made elsewhere.

Therefore democracy must expand.

Into the workplace.

The municipality.

The neighborhood.

The economy.

The school.

The region.

But criticizing shallow democracy must never become an excuse for armed minorities to override elections.

The answer to insufficient democracy is deeper democracy.

Not substitution by violence.

IX. Autonomy Can Be a School of Freedom

Revolutionary maximalism often dismisses partial gains.

Moshe Reed Thought refuses this.

A language school matters.

A regional parliament matters.

A cooperative matters.

A municipal power matters.

A cultural institution matters.

A union matters.

A public accountability mechanism matters.

None is perfect.

None completes liberation.

But human beings live in the present.

A child cannot wait for the revolution to learn a language.

A worker cannot wait for utopia to gain representation.

A family cannot wait for final sovereignty to obtain housing.

Freedom must be constructed in stages while the larger horizon remains open.

X. Economic Democracy Is Essential

National liberation without economic democracy can reproduce domination under a new flag.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore places worker ownership and community power at the center of political transformation.

The cooperative offers a different model from both corporate capitalism and centralized bureaucratic command.

Workers participate in ownership.

Decision-making becomes shared.

Economic life becomes a field of citizenship.

The same principle extends to land, housing, banking, energy, and infrastructure.

A commonwealth is not merely a political constitution.

It is a material structure of shared power.

The question is not only:

Who governs the territory?

It is also:

Who owns the workplace?

Who owns the land?

Who controls credit?

Who determines investment?

Who benefits from production?

Without these questions, national freedom can become symbolic while material dependence continues.

XI. Memory Must Not Become Ammunition

The dead deserve memory.

Victims deserve recognition.

Families deserve truth.

But memory can be militarized.

One death justifies another.

One atrocity becomes proof that reconciliation is betrayal.

One generation teaches the next whom to hate.

Moshe Reed Thought proposes reconciliatory memory.

This does not mean forgetting.

It means remembering without recruiting the dead into new conflicts.

The dead cannot demand revenge.

The living speak for them.

Therefore, the living must speak carefully.

XII. Peace Requires More Courage Than Myth Admits

The militant myth celebrates the person who begins fighting.

History should also remember those who stop.

Those who negotiate.

Those who admit error.

Those who speak against their own faction.

Those who recognize the suffering of an opponent.

Those who transform organizations.

Those who build institutions after conflict.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this civic courage.

Civic courage is less dramatic than armed courage.

It rarely appears on posters.

But societies survive through it.

XIII. The Commonwealth as Alternative

Moshe Reed Thought offers the commonwealth as an alternative to both centralized state nationalism and clandestine revolutionary vanguardism.

The commonwealth begins from below.

The person.

The family.

The neighborhood.

The workplace.

The municipality.

The region.

The federation.

Power moves upward only where coordination requires it.

Economic institutions become democratic.

Cultural communities receive protection.

Minorities retain rights.

Political arrangements remain open to peaceful revision.

Sovereignty becomes layered.

The purpose is not uniformity.

It is cooperation without domination.

XIV. A Moshe Reed Doctrine of Political Struggle

From this history, Moshe Reed Thought develops a doctrine of political struggle.

Resistance to oppression is legitimate.

Methods remain morally accountable.

Human life cannot become material for abstraction.

Civilian immunity must be protected.

Torture is always rejected.

Collective punishment is rejected.

Political assassination cannot substitute for democratic participation.

Coercive financing is not solidarity.

The state must remain under law.

Movements must permit internal criticism.

National identity must remain open to pluralism.

Economic democracy should be built through participatory institutions.

Political goals should be pursued through persuasion, organization, election, labor action, civil resistance, cooperative construction, and democratic transformation.

The movement must always be capable of becoming unnecessary.

XV. The Final Lesson

ETA began in a world of dictatorship.

It developed through nationalism, revolutionary ideology, clandestinity, repression, armed struggle, internal division, and historical change.

It survived the dictator who shaped the world of its birth.

It continued into democracy.

It became trapped within cycles of violence and retaliation.

It caused suffering.

It also existed within a conflict in which the state committed serious abuses that must remain part of historical memory.

Eventually, the armed campaign ended.

The organization dissolved.

The Basque people remained.

The language remained.

The culture remained.

The political disagreements remained.

The democratic struggle remained.

This may be the deepest lesson.

Organizations are temporary.

Peoples are larger than organizations.

Human life is larger than ideology.

The future is larger than the conflicts inherited from the past.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore concludes:

A revolution worthy of humanity must make people more capable of governing themselves.

A nation worthy of love must permit disagreement.

A state worthy of legitimacy must remain accountable to law.

A movement worthy of trust must accept criticism.

A society worthy of peace must remember victims without creating new enemies.

And a commonwealth worthy of the future must be built through free participation rather than fear.

The final purpose of political struggle is not permanent struggle.

It is a society in which ordinary people no longer require heroes with guns to speak on their behalf.

The weapon must become unnecessary.

The secret cell must become unnecessary.

The emergency must end.

The people must become political subjects rather than symbols.

That is the movement from domination to participation.

From fear to commonwealth.

From the politics of enemies to the politics of shared life.

And from history as inherited conflict to history as conscious construction.

Epilogue

After the Weapon Falls Silent

There is a strange silence after a long conflict ends.

Not complete silence.

The cities still move.

Factories open.

Schools begin their mornings.

Buses arrive.

People go to work.

Children play.

Political arguments continue.

Elections are held.

Flags remain.

Prisons remain.

Memorials remain.

Families remember.

But something has changed.

The expectation of the next attack begins to disappear.

A politician walks through a public square without the same calculation of danger.

A journalist writes without the same shadow.

A family speaks more openly.

A child grows up knowing the conflict through history rather than immediate fear.

This is not a dramatic revolution.

There is no final battle.

No perfect victory.

No moment when every contradiction disappears.

There is ordinary life.

Moshe Reed Thought considers ordinary life one of the highest achievements of politics.

The revolutionary imagination often looks beyond it.

It dreams of great transformations.

New states.

New constitutions.

New social systems.

New flags.

New humanity.

But every political vision must eventually answer a simple question:

Can a person live?

Can a worker return home safely?

Can a child grow without inheriting an enemy?

Can a dissenter speak?

Can a community preserve its language?

Can a family disagree about politics without fear?

Can a journalist investigate power?

Can a prisoner retain human dignity?

Can a police officer perform lawful public service without becoming an instrument of revenge?

Can a nationalist campaign for independence without threatening an opponent?

Can a unionist defend constitutional unity without suppressing cultural identity?

Can a socialist organize workers without treating them as material for a vanguard?

Can a state protect society without becoming a secret enemy of its own laws?

These are not small questions.

They are the substance of civilization.

I. The People Outlive the Organization

Organizations speak as though they are history.

They are not.

Organizations are moments within history.

They rise.

Split.

Change.

Decline.

Dissolve.

The people remain.

The history of ETA demonstrates this clearly.

Before ETA, Basque identity existed.

After ETA, Basque identity continued.

Before ETA, questions of language, culture, political autonomy, and national identity existed.

After ETA's dissolution, these questions remained.

No organization owns a people.

This is one of the deepest principles of Moshe Reed Thought.

A political organization may serve a community.

It may defend a community.

It may betray a community.

It may misunderstand a community.

But it can never become identical with the community.

The people are always larger.

II. The Language Survives Through Life

A language does not survive because someone dies for it.

A language survives because someone speaks it.

A parent speaks to a child.

A teacher teaches a class.

A writer writes a novel.

A musician sings.

A filmmaker creates.

A shopkeeper greets a customer.

A public institution provides services.

A student jokes with friends.

This is cultural victory.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the militarization of cultural identity.

The deepest defense of culture is cultural life.

A living language needs speakers more than martyrs.

It needs schools more than funerals.

It needs books more than weapons.

It needs confidence more than fear.

Culture becomes strongest when it no longer requires an enemy to explain its existence.

III. The Nation After Violence

Nationalism after violence faces a moral responsibility.

It must separate love from hatred.

A person can love the Basque Country without hating Spain.

A person can value Spanish identity without denying Basque identity.

A person can support independence without supporting ETA.

A person can oppose independence without becoming an enemy of Basque culture.

The political maturity of a nation is measured partly by how it treats internal disagreement.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **plural patriotism**.

Plural patriotism loves without demanding uniformity.

It protects language without policing ancestry.

It honors history without manufacturing enemies.

It allows constitutional disagreement.

It welcomes newcomers into civic belonging.

It understands the homeland as a shared inheritance rather than private ideological property.

IV. The State After Terrorism

The state also faces a responsibility after conflict.

Emergency powers develop habits.

Security institutions develop interests.

Surveillance systems rarely volunteer to disappear.

Political fear can outlive the threat that produced it.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore asks:

When does emergency end?

This question must be answered openly.

A state cannot remain permanently organized against a threat that has fundamentally changed.

Institutions must be reviewed.

Exceptional measures must be reconsidered.

Abuses must be investigated.

Archives should be opened where lawful and appropriate.

Democratic oversight must deepen.

The end of armed conflict should strengthen democracy.

Not merely strengthen the state.

V. The Former Militant

What becomes of the militant when militancy ends?

This is one of the least understood questions of political conflict.

The person may have spent years within an organization.

Identity was built around discipline.

Secrecy.

Risk.

Sacrifice.

Comradeship.

Then the organization ends.

Ordinary life returns.

But ordinary life may feel unfamiliar.

Moshe Reed Thought believes reintegration is essential.

A society cannot demand that armed movements disappear while providing no path for human beings to return to ordinary civic life.

This does not erase responsibility.

Serious crimes require accountability.

But accountability and permanent dehumanization are not the same.

The former militant must be allowed the possibility of becoming a neighbor.

A worker.

A parent.

A writer.

A political activist using peaceful methods.

A person who changes.

Peace requires faith in human transformation.

VI. The Victim and the Right Not to Reconcile

Reconciliation cannot be commanded.

A victim may forgive.

Another may not.

A family may participate in dialogue.

Another may refuse.

Moshe Reed Thought respects both.

The state should create conditions for truth and recognition.

It cannot manufacture emotional outcomes.

Forgiveness belongs to the person.

Justice belongs to public institutions.

Memory belongs to society.

These must not be confused.

A victim should not be required to forgive in order to make society comfortable.

Nor should the pain of victims be appropriated by political actors seeking endless conflict.

The victim remains a person.

Not a symbol owned by a faction.

VII. The Child Who Inherits No Enemy

The greatest measure of successful peace is generational.

Does the child inherit a grievance?

Yes, perhaps.

History should be remembered.

Does the child inherit knowledge?

Yes.

Education matters.

Does the child inherit an enemy?

Moshe Reed Thought says no.

A child should not be told that another child is an enemy because of nationality, language, family history, political tradition, or the actions of previous generations.

The transmission of memory must stop before the transmission of hatred.

This is one of the most difficult tasks of post-conflict society.

Families tell stories.

Communities preserve wounds.

Political organizations construct narratives.

Schools teach history.

The objective should not be amnesia.

It should be historical consciousness without inherited vengeance.

VIII. The Ordinary Revolutionary

Moshe Reed Thought ends by redefining the revolutionary.

The revolutionary is not necessarily the person holding a weapon.

The revolutionary may be the worker building a cooperative.

The teacher preserving a language.

The journalist exposing corruption.

The local official expanding participation.

The tenant organizing neighbors.

The farmer building regional food security.

The engineer developing public infrastructure.

The artist preserving memory.

The mediator bringing enemies into conversation.

The former militant rejecting violence.

The police officer refusing an unlawful order.

The citizen criticizing their own political camp.

The parent teaching a child that identity does not require hatred.

These acts rarely enter heroic mythology.

But they construct the commonwealth.

IX. Revolution as Construction

Destruction is immediate.

Construction is slow.

A building can be destroyed in seconds.

It may require years to rebuild.

Trust can be destroyed by one act.

It may require generations to restore.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore defines revolution primarily as construction.

Build institutions.

Build capacity.

Build trust.

Build democratic habits.

Build worker ownership.

Build cultural confidence.

Build local power.

Build systems of accountability.

Build relationships across disagreement.

The revolutionary question is not:

What can we destroy?

It is:

What can we build that makes domination unnecessary?

This is the constructive revolution.

X. Beyond the Romance of the Gun

The gun possesses political romance because it creates immediate consequence.

A speech may be ignored.

A petition may fail.

An election may disappoint.

A cooperative may take years to establish.

A weapon creates an event immediately.

But immediacy is not transformation.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the romance of political violence.

Not because conflict is imaginary.

Not because oppression never exists.

Not because states are always legitimate.

But because the weapon concentrates agency in the hands of the few.

The commonwealth distributes agency among the many.

The gun says:

We will act for you.

Democracy says:

Act with us.

The cooperative says:

Own with us.

The assembly says:

Decide with us.

The commonwealth says:

Build with us.

XI. The Final Commonwealth Principle

The entire history examined in this book returns to one question:

Who possesses the right to determine the future?

The dictator says:

I do.

The centralized state says:

The institutions do.

The revolutionary vanguard says:

We do.

The corporation says:

Ownership does.

The nationalist absolutist says:

The nation does.

Moshe Reed Thought answers differently.

The future belongs to living people participating freely through institutions that distribute power, protect dignity, permit dissent, and remain capable of peaceful transformation.

No institution receives permanent ownership of history.

No leader becomes history.

No party becomes the people.

No armed organization becomes the nation.

No state becomes sacred.

The commonwealth remains unfinished because human freedom remains a practice.

XII. After the Last Chapter

The history of ETA contains dictatorship and resistance.

Idealism and dogma.

Courage and cruelty.

Cultural survival and political coercion.

State law and state illegality.

Revolutionary aspiration and institutional entrapment.

Victims and perpetrators.

People who were sometimes both at different moments of life.

There is no single slogan capable of containing this history.

That is precisely why it should be studied.

The purpose of study is not to inherit old enemies.

It is to become less vulnerable to the patterns that created them.

The central warning of this book is simple:

A just cause can be corrupted by unjust means.

A lawful state can become criminal when it abandons law.

A movement can begin by serving people and end by demanding that people serve the movement.

A nation can preserve identity without worshipping itself.

A society can remember without continuing the war through memory.

And political struggle can be radical without becoming violent.

After the weapon falls silent, the difficult work begins.

The work of speaking.

Listening.

Remembering.

Building.

Disagreeing.

Participating.

Governing.

Forgiving where forgiveness is freely given.

Seeking justice where justice remains necessary.

And constructing institutions strong enough that no secret organization and no unaccountable state structure can again claim the right to decide the future through fear.

The final revolution is not the moment when one side destroys another.

It is the moment when people cease requiring enemies in order to know who they are.

That revolution has no final date.

It is practiced every day.

In the workplace.

In the school.

In the municipality.

In the home.

In the parliament.

In the street.

In the difficult conversation between people who remember the same history differently.

The weapon has fallen silent.

History remains.

The commonwealth begins there.

Afterword

Neither the State nor the Gun

The history examined in this book presents two recurring temptations.

The first is the temptation of the state.

The state claims that order requires obedience.

Security requires secrecy.

Unity requires centralization.

Emergency requires exceptional power.

The second is the temptation of the gun.

The armed movement claims that justice requires violence.

Liberation requires discipline.

Revolution requires secrecy.

Historical necessity requires sacrifice.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects both temptations when they become absolute.

Neither the state nor the gun is sacred.

Neither official authority nor revolutionary intention provides moral immunity.

A uniform does not automatically create justice.

A revolutionary flag does not automatically create liberation.

Power must be judged by what it does to human beings.

Does it increase their capacity to participate?

Does it allow them to disagree?

Does it protect them from arbitrary domination?

Does it distribute economic power?

Does it preserve cultural life?

Does it remain accountable?

Can it be peacefully changed?

Can the individual safely refuse?

These questions are more important than the slogans attached to power.

The history of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna provides a particularly difficult field for examining them because the organization emerged from a real historical context of dictatorship and repression but continued operating after that context had fundamentally changed.

The danger of simple history is that it forces us to choose between two myths.

One myth says that the state was always legitimate and resistance was therefore meaningless.

The other says that because resistance emerged from genuine grievances, everything done in the name of resistance becomes understandable to the point of justification.

Moshe Reed Thought accepts neither.

The state can be wrong.

The revolutionary can be wrong.

The state can be right about the revolutionary's violence while being wrong about its own abuses.

The revolutionary can be right about repression while being wrong about the methods used in response.

Human beings are capable of contradiction.

Institutions are capable of contradiction.

History is filled with contradiction.

The purpose of political philosophy is not to eliminate contradiction through propaganda.

It is to understand reality well enough to act without becoming what one claims to oppose.

I. The Problem of Historical Innocence

Every political tradition wants innocent ancestors.

The nationalist wants heroes.

The revolutionary wants martyrs.

The state wants defenders.

The party wants founders.

Historical memory becomes a search for moral purity.

But history rarely provides it.

People act under conditions they did not choose.

They possess incomplete information.

They inherit prejudices.

They make courageous decisions.

They make terrible decisions.

Sometimes the same person does both.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the cult of historical innocence.

A mature political tradition should be capable of examining its own history without collapse.

If discovering wrongdoing destroys an ideology, the ideology was dependent upon mythology.

Truth should strengthen political thought.

Not threaten it.

II. The State as Necessary but Dangerous

Moshe Reed Thought is not anarchism in the simplistic sense of believing that all public authority can immediately disappear.

Large societies require coordination.

Infrastructure must be maintained.

Public health requires institutions.

Disputes require resolution.

Environmental systems cross local boundaries.

Transportation networks require planning.

Rights require protection.

But necessity does not make authority harmless.

The state must therefore be limited through distributed power.

Municipal autonomy.

Regional autonomy.

Democratic legislatures.

Independent courts.

Public oversight.

Transparent administration.

Worker institutions.

Free journalism.

Civil society.

The objective is not the fantasy of powerlessness.

It is the prevention of concentrated, unaccountable power.

III. Revolution Without Vanguard Ownership

Moshe Reed Thought retains the revolutionary desire for transformation while rejecting vanguard ownership of history.

A revolution worthy of the name should expand the number of people capable of making meaningful decisions.

If power becomes more concentrated after revolution, the revolution has contradicted its purpose.

If workers remain commanded from above, economic democracy has not been achieved.

If communities remain dependent upon distant bureaucracy, political decentralization has not been achieved.

If disagreement becomes treason, liberation has failed.

The revolution must be judged institutionally.

Not poetically.

IV. The Commonwealth Is Built Before Victory

Traditional revolutionary strategy often divides history into two periods.

Before victory.

After victory.

Before victory, the movement struggles.

After victory, the movement builds.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this separation.

Building must begin immediately.

A cooperative can be created before national independence.

A language school can operate before constitutional transformation.

A union can organize before socialism.

A community land trust can protect housing before revolution.

A municipal assembly can expand participation within existing institutions.

A mutual-aid network can create solidarity now.

These are not distractions from transformation.

They are transformation.

The future must appear in institutional form before it can become general.

V. Against the Theology of Violence

Political violence often acquires religious characteristics even within secular movements.

The dead become martyrs.

Sacrifice becomes sacred.

The organization becomes the guardian of memory.

The enemy becomes absolute evil.

Victory becomes redemption.

History becomes providence.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this the **theology of violence**.

The theology of violence is dangerous because it transforms strategy into sacred duty.

A strategy can be revised.

A sacred duty cannot.

A tactic can be abandoned.

A holy obligation demands continuation.

The movement therefore loses flexibility.

Moshe Reed Thought desacralizes political violence.

Violence is not spiritually purifying.

Suffering does not automatically create wisdom.

Martyrdom does not prove correctness.

Sacrifice does not guarantee justice.

History does not reward blood according to quantity.

VI. Against the Theology of the State

States develop their own sacred language.

The flag becomes untouchable.

Territorial integrity becomes metaphysical.

Security institutions become beyond criticism.

Military death becomes sacred sacrifice.

National unity becomes an unquestionable good.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this the **theology of sovereignty**.

The theology of sovereignty says that existing borders possess greater moral value than living people.

It treats constitutional arrangements as eternal.

It confuses criticism of government with hatred of country.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this.

Borders are political arrangements.

Constitutions are human documents.

States are historical institutions.

They can be changed.

The question is how change occurs.

Moshe Reed Thought favors peaceful democratic revision, consent, negotiation, federal experimentation, and layered sovereignty.

VII. The Right to Political Heresy

Every political movement needs heretics.

The person who asks the forbidden question.

The member who challenges leadership.

The supporter who condemns an action.

The intellectual who revises doctrine.

The former militant who rejects the weapon.

The citizen who refuses a forced binary.

Moshe Reed Thought considers political heresy necessary for healthy institutions.

Without internal criticism, movements become epistemically closed.

Every failure is blamed on the enemy.

Every criticism becomes betrayal.

Every contradiction is hidden.

The movement gradually loses contact with reality.

The right to dissent must therefore exist inside the movement as well as outside it.

VIII. No More Inherited Enemies

The child born after a conflict did not participate in its beginning.

The child did not choose the history.

Yet societies often hand the child a political inheritance.

These were our martyrs.

Those were their criminals.

This was our suffering.

That was their betrayal.

Moshe Reed Thought refuses hereditary guilt.

No person inherits criminal responsibility from parents, grandparents, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or political community.

History should be inherited as knowledge.

Not guilt.

Not vengeance.

Not obligation to hate.

IX. The Human Scale of Politics

Grand political systems often lose sight of scale.

The state sees populations.

The corporation sees markets.

The party sees voters.

The revolutionary organization sees masses.

Moshe Reed Thought returns repeatedly to the person.

Not isolated individualism.

The person exists within family, community, workplace, culture, and ecology.

But the person must never disappear inside these structures.

The test of politics is experienced at the human scale.

Can I speak?

Can I work with dignity?

Can I participate?

Can I raise a family?

Can I preserve my culture?

Can I disagree?

Can I organize?

Can I refuse?

Can I live without fear?

These questions reveal more about freedom than grand declarations.

X. The Revolutionary Patience of Construction

Building is slow.

This frustrates movements seeking immediate transformation.

But the slowness of construction is not necessarily weakness.

A cooperative creates relationships that can last.

A school shapes generations.

A democratic habit becomes cultural memory.

A transparent institution creates trust.

A successful municipality becomes an example.

Moshe Reed Thought calls this **revolutionary patience**.

Revolutionary patience does not mean accepting injustice forever.

It means distinguishing urgency from recklessness.

Some actions must be immediate.

A person in danger requires immediate protection.

A discriminatory law may require immediate challenge.

An abusive institution may require immediate investigation.

But social transformation itself requires durable structures.

There is no shortcut around the work of building.

XI. A Politics Beyond Martyrdom

The politics of martyrdom asks:

What are you willing to die for?

Moshe Reed Thought asks another question:

What are you willing to live for?

Can you spend years building an institution?

Can you attend meetings?

Can you compromise without abandoning principles?

Can you listen to people who disagree?

Can you accept electoral defeat?

Can you admit an error?

Can you perform ordinary work without recognition?

The politics of living is less dramatic than the politics of death.

It is also more difficult.

Death occurs once.

Construction requires repetition.

XII. The Measure of Liberation

Liberation should be measurable in lived relationships.

A worker has more control over work.

A tenant has greater housing security.

A community has meaningful influence over development.

A cultural minority can educate children in its language.

A journalist can investigate powerful institutions.

A citizen can criticize government.

A political minority can organize peacefully.

A prisoner retains human rights.

A police institution remains accountable.

A municipality possesses meaningful authority.

These are material indicators of freedom.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects purely symbolic liberation.

The flag matters to people.

Symbols matter.

Identity matters.

But symbols must be connected to institutional freedom.

Otherwise, domination can survive beneath new colors.

XIII. What the History of ETA Warns Against

The history warns against romanticizing armed struggle.

It warns against denying genuine historical grievances.

It warns against states answering unlawful violence with unlawful violence.

It warns against revolutionary organizations claiming ownership of national identity.

It warns against coercive financing disguised as political obligation.

It warns against treating civilians as abstractions.

It warns against inherited hatred.

It warns against permanent emergency.

It warns against confusing organizational survival with the survival of a cause.

Most importantly, it warns against closed moral systems in which every action by one's own side is explained and every action by the enemy is condemned.

Truth must remain independent of faction.

XIV. What the History Teaches Us to Build

The answer to violence is not political emptiness.

The answer is richer political life.

Build democratic municipalities.

Build cooperatives.

Build unions.

Build cultural institutions.

Build accountable policing.

Build independent journalism.

Build schools capable of teaching difficult history.

Build systems of restorative encounter where appropriate and freely entered.

Build constitutional mechanisms for peaceful change.

Build regional autonomy where communities desire it.

Build federal relationships based upon consent.

Build economic institutions that distribute ownership.

Build public spaces where opponents can meet without becoming enemies.

Peace is not passive.

It is constructed.

XV. Neither the State nor the Gun

The title of this afterword contains the central political choice of Moshe Reed Thought.

Neither the state nor the gun should possess final authority over human life.

The state is necessary for some forms of coordination, but it must remain accountable.

Resistance is sometimes necessary, but it must remain morally limited.

The nation can be loved, but it must not become an idol.

The revolution can seek transformation, but it must not become a religion of sacrifice.

The commonwealth offers another direction.

Power distributed.

Economy democratized.

Culture protected.

Communities strengthened.

Regions empowered.

Institutions accountable.

Dissent protected.

Violence rejected as a substitute for participation.

History remembered without being repeated.

This is not a perfect system.

No political order will eliminate conflict.

People will continue disagreeing.

Interests will collide.

Institutions will fail.

Corruption will appear.

Power will attempt to concentrate.

The commonwealth is therefore not a final utopia.

It is a permanent practice of distributing, questioning, and democratizing power.

The history of ETA ends as an organization.

The political questions continue.

That is not failure.

That is politics.

The people continue speaking.

Voting.

Organizing.

Arguing.

Writing.

Teaching.

Remembering.

Building.

No clandestine organization owns that future.

No state bureaucracy owns it.

No martyr owns it.

No leader owns it.

The future belongs to those who must live within it.

That is the final principle of Moshe Reed Thought.

The people must never become material for the dreams of institutions. Institutions must become instruments for the freedom of people.

Appendix I

Chronology of ETA: 1959–2018

This chronology provides a concise historical framework for the development, transformation, armed campaign, decline, disarmament, and dissolution of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna.

It should be read alongside the interpretive chapters of this book.

The chronology does not suggest that every event possesses equal historical or moral significance. Its purpose is to provide a temporal structure through which the wider development of the conflict can be understood.

1959 — Foundation

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, commonly known as ETA, was founded in 1959 during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco.

The organization emerged from a younger generation of Basque nationalists dissatisfied with what they regarded as the limitations and passivity of established nationalist politics.

Its name is commonly translated as **Basque Homeland and Freedom**.

At its beginning, ETA was concerned with Basque national identity, cultural survival, language, political sovereignty, and opposition to Francoist repression.

Over time, revolutionary socialist and anti-imperialist ideas became increasingly influential within important currents of the organization.

Early 1960s — Ideological Development

During the early 1960s, ETA developed from a nationalist cultural and political organization toward a revolutionary movement.

Internal debates concerned the meaning of Basque identity, the relationship between nationalism and socialism, revolutionary strategy, class politics, and the role of armed struggle.

These debates would continue throughout the organization's history.

ETA was never ideologically static.

Its development involved assemblies, factions, disagreements, expulsions, splits, and competing interpretations of national liberation.

Mid-1960s — Revolutionary Nationalism

By the middle of the decade, revolutionary nationalism had become increasingly central to ETA's identity.

The Basque question was interpreted not only as a cultural problem but as a struggle involving political sovereignty, class conflict, and opposition to the Spanish state.

The organization increasingly understood the Basque Country through the language of national liberation.

This period established concepts that would shape later strategic thinking.

1968 — Escalation of Lethal Violence

The year 1968 marked a major escalation.

ETA entered a new phase in which lethal political violence became central to the conflict.

The cycle of attack, repression, arrest, imprisonment, public protest, and further radicalization intensified.

For Moshe Reed Thought, this period illustrates the formation of the closed dialectic of enemies:

each actor increasingly interprets its own actions as responses to the previous actions of the other.

Responsibility becomes externalized.

The cycle begins to reproduce itself.

1970 — The Burgos Trial

The Burgos Trial became an important moment in the history of opposition to the Franco dictatorship and in international attention toward the Basque conflict.

The proceedings generated protests and international criticism.

The event increased attention to political repression under Franco and contributed to ETA's visibility.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes an important distinction:

Opposition to authoritarian repression did not necessarily imply support for every future action of ETA.

Historical coalitions formed under dictatorship would later divide under changing political conditions.

1973 — Assassination of Luis Carrero Blanco

In December 1973, ETA assassinated Spanish Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco in Madrid.

The killing became one of the most famous events associated with the organization.

Carrero Blanco was widely regarded as a central figure of the Francoist political order and a potential source of continuity beyond Franco.

The assassination gave ETA enormous international visibility.

Within revolutionary mythology, dramatic actions can acquire symbolic power far beyond their immediate strategic consequences.

Moshe Reed Thought warns that spectacular violence can also strengthen an organization's belief that dramatic action is the primary engine of history.

1974 — Internal Division and Strategic Disagreement

ETA experienced major internal divisions concerning the relationship between armed struggle and political organization.

Different currents debated revolutionary strategy, mass politics, and the role of military action.

These divisions reflected a recurring problem in revolutionary organizations:

Does political organization direct armed activity, or does the armed apparatus increasingly determine political strategy?

The question would remain important throughout the organization's later history.

1975 — Death of Francisco Franco

Francisco Franco died in November 1975.

His death opened a new historical period.

The political conditions that had shaped ETA's formation began to change fundamentally.

Spain entered a transition toward parliamentary democracy.

Political parties emerged from illegality.

Elections returned.

New constitutional arrangements were developed.

For ETA, this transformation created a crisis of revolutionary purpose.

The organization had been formed under dictatorship.

It now had to determine whether the changing political environment altered the justification for armed struggle.

ETA continued its campaign.

1976–1977 — Democratic Opening

Political reform accelerated.

Political prisoners and amnesty became major public issues.

Legal political participation expanded.

Elections were held in 1977.

The political environment remained tense and imperfect, but the structure of political possibility was changing.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies this period as the beginning of the democratic test:

Could revolutionary politics transform from clandestine violence into public persuasion?

ETA's continued armed activity demonstrated that major currents of the organization believed the transition had not resolved the national and revolutionary questions.

1978 — The Spanish Constitution

The Spanish Constitution of 1978 established a new democratic constitutional order.

The document created the framework for a decentralized state composed of autonomous communities.

Basque political opinion toward the constitutional settlement was diverse.

The transition created legal and institutional possibilities that did not exist under Franco, but disagreements concerning sovereignty and national self-determination remained.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes between an unresolved political question and the absence of peaceful political space.

A political question may remain unresolved while democratic mechanisms exist for continuing the struggle through lawful means.

1979 — Basque Statute of Autonomy

The Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country established a significant framework of regional self-government.

Basque autonomous institutions developed powers in important areas of public life.

For supporters of autonomy, this represented a major achievement.

For revolutionary separatists, autonomy remained insufficient because full independence and the desired territorial framework had not been achieved.

The political debate between autonomy and independence continued.

Moshe Reed Thought interprets autonomy pragmatically:

partial self-government should neither be worshipped as perfect freedom nor dismissed as meaningless.

The question is whether institutions expand the real capacity of communities to govern themselves.

Late 1970s to Early 1980s — Intensification of Violence

The democratic transition did not produce an immediate decline in ETA violence.

The late 1970s and early 1980s were among the most violent periods associated with the organization.

This historical fact is central to understanding ETA.

The organization's armed campaign cannot be explained solely as resistance to Franco personally.

Its goals extended to national independence and, within major ideological currents, revolutionary socialist transformation.

The continuation of violence during democratization deepened the contradiction between the organization's claim to represent the people and the expanding ability of the population to participate through elections and legal political institutions.

1980 — Democratic Institutions and Armed Continuation

By 1980, the contrast between institutional politics and armed struggle had become increasingly visible.

Basque political life contained multiple nationalist and non-nationalist tendencies.

Elections demonstrated political diversity.

ETA nevertheless continued to act through clandestine authority.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies this as the problem of closed representation.

The organization claimed to represent the people while possessing no democratic mechanism through which the people could withdraw that representation.

1983–1987 — The GAL Period

The Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación, known as GAL, operated during the 1980s as part of an unlawful campaign against people believed to be connected with ETA and its environment.

GAL became associated with kidnapping, torture, and killing.

The later exposure of connections involving state officials produced a major scandal.

For Moshe Reed Thought, GAL demonstrates reciprocal degradation.

The armed organization imitates state sovereignty.

The state, in turn, imitates clandestine violence.

Both claim necessity.

Both point to the enemy.

The result is moral and institutional corruption.

1987 — Hipercor Bombing

In June 1987, an ETA bombing at the Hipercor shopping center in Barcelona killed civilians and became one of the deadliest attacks in the organization's history.

The attack became a major symbol of civilian suffering caused by political violence.

For Moshe Reed Thought, such events expose the collapse of revolutionary abstraction.

The organization may speak of targets, strategy, warnings, or responsibility.

But the human reality remains.

People who were living ordinary lives were killed.

No theory can make them abstractions.

Late 1980s — Negotiation Attempts and Continuing Conflict

The late 1980s included efforts at dialogue and negotiation, alongside continued violence.

This pattern would recur.

Contact.

Hope.

Ceasefire discussions.

Failure.

Renewed violence.

Each failed process increased distrust.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes that negotiation is not surrender.

Communication between enemies may be necessary to end conflict.

But negotiation must not allow armed actors to substitute themselves for the democratic population.

1990s — Political Pressure, Violence, and Social Change

Throughout the 1990s, ETA continued attacks while political and social opposition to violence became increasingly visible.

Basque society remained politically diverse.

Nationalist politics could no longer be treated as synonymous with support for ETA.

This distinction became increasingly important.

A person could support Basque independence and oppose ETA.

A person could support greater autonomy and oppose ETA.

A person could criticize the Spanish state and oppose ETA.

Moshe Reed Thought regards this political differentiation as essential.

No armed organization owns a national cause.

1995 — Attempted Assassination of José María Aznar

ETA attempted to assassinate opposition leader José María Aznar, who survived the attack.

The event demonstrated the continuing role of targeted political violence in the organization's strategy.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects assassination as a substitute for democratic political competition.

Political leaders should be defeated through persuasion, election, investigation, lawful removal, and public opposition.

The weapon cannot become a ballot with ammunition.

1997 — Kidnapping and Killing of Miguel Ángel Blanco

The kidnapping and killing of local politician Miguel Ángel Blanco produced enormous public demonstrations and became a major turning point in public mobilization against ETA violence.

The response demonstrated the capacity of civil society to oppose political violence through mass peaceful action.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies such mobilization as an example of civic power.

The citizen enters public space without becoming an armed actor.

The crowd does not need a clandestine vanguard.

It speaks directly.

1998 — Lizarra-Garazi Period and Ceasefire

A ceasefire announced in 1998 created renewed hope that the conflict might move toward peaceful resolution.

The political environment changed rapidly.

Expectations rose.

Dialogue became possible.

But the ceasefire did not become a permanent end to armed activity.

Its failure deepened disappointment and distrust.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes tactical pauses from transformative cessation.

The decisive question is whether a ceasefire is used to improve a position within conflict or to leave the logic of conflict entirely.

1999–2000 — End of Ceasefire and Renewed Violence

The ceasefire ended and ETA resumed violence.

The return to armed activity demonstrated the fragility of peace processes when political expectations, strategic calculations, and mutual distrust remain unresolved.

Every failed ceasefire has consequences beyond immediate strategy.

People who hoped for peace become cynical.

Opponents of negotiation claim vindication.

Hardliners gain arguments.

Future dialogue becomes more difficult.

This is why Moshe Reed Thought considers ceasefires morally important.

They create expectations among ordinary people.

Those expectations should not be treated as tactical material.

Early 2000s — Declining Strategic Space

During the early 2000s, ETA operated within an increasingly difficult environment.

Security pressure intensified.

Political conditions changed.

Public opposition to violence remained significant.

International attitudes toward terrorism hardened sharply.

The social and political space available to armed struggle continued to contract.

The organization increasingly faced the question that confronts every long-lived armed movement:

Does continuation serve the cause, or has continuation itself become the institution's primary purpose?

2006 — Permanent Ceasefire Announcement

ETA announced what it described as a permanent ceasefire in March 2006.

The announcement created another opportunity for movement toward peace.

Dialogue and political expectations followed.

But the process again failed.

The failure reinforced the central problem of credibility.

A peace process depends upon the belief that commitments are meaningful.

Once trust has been repeatedly broken, even genuine future commitments are viewed with suspicion.

December 2006 — Madrid-Barajas Airport Bombing

The bombing at Madrid-Barajas Airport shattered confidence in the ceasefire process.

The attack caused deaths and marked the failure of the peace initiative.

Moshe Reed Thought identifies this event as an example of the destructive power of strategic ambiguity.

A movement cannot simultaneously cultivate the expectation of peace and preserve violence as an instrument of negotiation without destroying trust.

Peace requires clarity.

2007 — Formal End of the 2006 Ceasefire

ETA formally declared the ceasefire over in 2007.

The return to open armed activity occurred within an increasingly unfavorable strategic environment.

The organization's political and social isolation deepened.

The conflict had entered its final historical phase.

2008–2010 — Increasing Pressure and Strategic Decline

Arrests, security pressure, organizational disruption, political developments, and changing attitudes further weakened ETA.

The historical world that had produced the organization in 1959 was now distant.

A new generation had grown up under democratic institutions and Basque autonomy.

The organization faced a fundamental contradiction.

Its political goals could continue to exist.

Its method increasingly could not.

2010 — Movement Toward Cessation

ETA announced that it would no longer carry out armed offensive actions.

The declaration represented another stage in the movement away from armed activity.

The crucial question remained whether the transition would be permanent and irreversible.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes that peace is built through conduct over time.

Words begin a process.

Repeated behavior establishes credibility.

2011 — Definitive End of Armed Activity

On 20 October 2011, ETA announced the definitive cessation of its armed activity.

This was the decisive turning point.

The organization did not achieve the revolutionary victory imagined in its earlier history.

Basque independence had not been achieved.

The Spanish state remained.

The constitutional order remained.

Yet armed activity ended.

For Moshe Reed Thought, this demonstrates a central principle:

A political objective can continue after a violent method has ended.

The cause and the organization are not identical.

The objective and the tactic are not identical.

Political struggle can survive the abandonment of the weapon.

2011–2017 — The Post-Violence Transition

The years following the definitive cessation involved continuing debates concerning prisoners, victims, memory, accountability, disarmament, and political normalization.

The absence of attacks changed the political atmosphere.

But the end of violence did not erase the consequences of decades of conflict.

Families continued grieving.

Prisoners remained a major issue.

Historical narratives remained contested.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes negative peace from constructive peace.

Negative peace is the absence of attack.

Constructive peace is the rebuilding of trust, accountability, democratic participation, and shared civic life.

The first can occur quickly.

The second requires generations.

2017 — Disarmament

In April 2017, ETA completed a major process of disarmament.

The surrender of weapons had practical and symbolic importance.

The weapon was no longer presented as an instrument of political authority.

For Moshe Reed Thought, disarmament means more than the removal of material objects.

It means the surrender of a political claim:

the claim that possession of organized violence gives an institution special authority over the future.

2018 — Dissolution

In 2018, ETA announced the end of its organizational existence.

The organization that had begun in 1959 formally dissolved after nearly six decades of history.

Its dissolution did not end Basque nationalism.

It did not end debate over independence.

It did not end criticism of the Spanish state.

It did not end socialist politics.

It did not end questions concerning memory, prisoners, victims, language, autonomy, or sovereignty.

It ended the organization.

This distinction is the final lesson of the chronology.

A people is larger than an organization.

A political question is larger than a tactic.

A culture is larger than a clandestine structure.

A future is larger than the institutions inherited from the past.

Chronological Summary

1959: ETA founded under the Franco dictatorship.

1960s: Ideological development toward revolutionary nationalism and increasing acceptance of armed struggle.

1968: Major escalation into lethal political violence.

1970: Burgos Trial attracts international attention.

1973: Assassination of Luis Carrero Blanco.

1974: Major internal divisions over political and military strategy.

1975: Death of Franco.

1976–1977: Democratic opening and return of electoral politics.

1978: New Spanish Constitution.

1979: Basque Statute of Autonomy.

Late 1970s–early 1980s: Intensification of ETA violence during democratic transition.

1983–1987: GAL dirty-war period.

1987: Hipercor bombing.

Late 1980s: Negotiation attempts alongside continued conflict.

1990s: Continued violence and growing social mobilization against ETA.

1995: Attempted assassination of José María Aznar.

1997: Kidnapping and killing of Miguel Ángel Blanco, followed by mass public protest.

1998: Ceasefire and renewed political negotiations.

1999–2000: Collapse of ceasefire and return to violence.

Early 2000s: Increasing strategic and political pressure.

2006: Permanent ceasefire announced.

December 2006: Madrid-Barajas Airport bombing undermines the peace process.

2007: Ceasefire formally ends.

2008–2010: Increasing organizational pressure and decline.

2010: Movement toward cessation of offensive armed activity.

2011: Definitive end of armed activity announced.

2011–2017: Post-violence transition and debates over disarmament, prisoners, victims, and memory.

2017: Disarmament.

2018: Formal dissolution of ETA.

Concluding Chronological Principle

The chronology of ETA demonstrates that political organizations are historical rather than eternal.

ETA emerged from one political world.

It changed within another.

It survived into a third.

Eventually, the contradiction between its historical method and contemporary political conditions became impossible to sustain.

The dictatorship ended.

Democratic institutions developed.

Basque autonomy expanded.

Political nationalism entered electoral life.

The armed campaign continued for decades.

Eventually, armed activity ceased.

Weapons were surrendered.

The organization dissolved.

The Basque people continued.

That final sequence should remain central to any historical interpretation.

The nation was never identical with ETA.

Basque culture was never identical with ETA.

Basque nationalism was never identical with ETA.

The independence movement was never identical with ETA.

A political cause cannot be permanently owned by one organization.

The history belongs to everyone affected by it:

supporters,

opponents,

victims,

families,

prisoners,

politicians,

workers,

journalists,

police officers,

activists,

migrants,

children,

and the generations born afterward.

The chronology ends in 2018.

The political future does not.

History continues through peaceful disagreement, cultural life, democratic organization, economic transformation, memory, and the ordinary construction of shared institutions.

The organization ended.

The people remained.

The future returned to them.

Appendix II

Glossary of Basque Political and Historical Terms

This glossary provides concise explanations of important political, cultural, ideological, and historical terms used throughout this book. The definitions are written within the interpretive framework of Moshe Reed Thought while preserving distinctions between historical description and philosophical analysis.

Aberri

A Basque word meaning **homeland** or **fatherland**.

Within Basque nationalism, the term carries cultural, historical, territorial, and emotional meaning. It refers not merely to administrative territory but to the idea of a national homeland.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes love of homeland from worship of the nation. A homeland can be loved without treating political opponents as enemies.

Aberri Eguna

Literally **Day of the Homeland**.

A political and cultural observance associated with Basque nationalism. It has historically served as an occasion for public expressions of Basque identity and differing nationalist political aspirations.

Moshe Reed Thought interprets public cultural observance as legitimate democratic expression when participation remains voluntary and pluralistic.

Abertzale

A Basque term generally referring to a **Basque patriot** or **Basque nationalist**.

The term covers a broad political spectrum and should not automatically be treated as synonymous with support for armed struggle.

An abertzale may support independence, sovereignty, greater autonomy, socialist transformation, or other forms of Basque national political expression.

One of the recurring principles of this book is that nationalism and support for ETA must not be treated as identical categories.

Abertzale Left

A broad term used for currents of left-wing Basque nationalism.

Historically, the abertzale left has included different organizations, political tendencies, social movements, and strategic positions.

It should not be treated as a permanently uniform political bloc.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes the importance of distinguishing legal political advocacy, social movement activity, revolutionary ideology, and armed organizational activity.

Political environments are complex.

Categories should not erase differences.

Action-Repression-Action

A revolutionary strategic concept in which an armed action is expected to provoke state repression, which in turn is expected to radicalize the population and generate further resistance.

The theory assumes that confrontation can reveal the coercive nature of the state.

Moshe Reed Thought strongly criticizes this strategy because ordinary people may be treated as instruments within a revolutionary process they did not authorize.

A movement should not deliberately seek suffering for a population in order to create political consciousness.

Armed Struggle

The use of organized political violence in pursuit of political objectives.

In the context of ETA, armed struggle included assassinations, bombings, kidnappings, and other forms of coercive activity.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes between understanding the historical origins of armed struggle and morally justifying particular acts.

Historical explanation is necessary.

Moral immunity is rejected.

Autonomy

A system of self-government in which a territory possesses significant political powers while remaining within a larger state.

The Basque Autonomous Community developed substantial institutions of self-government under Spain's post-Franco constitutional order.

Moshe Reed Thought evaluates autonomy according to actual institutional power rather than slogans.

The questions are:

What can the autonomous institutions decide?

How are they financed?

How accountable are they?

How much participation exists below the regional level?

Autonomy may be incomplete while still representing meaningful political capacity.

Basque Autonomous Community

An autonomous community within Spain consisting of Álava, Biscay, and Gipuzkoa.

It possesses its own political institutions and significant areas of self-government.

The Basque Autonomous Community should not be confused automatically with broader nationalist concepts of the Basque homeland, which may include additional territories.

This distinction is central to understanding disputes over territory and sovereignty.

Basque Country

A term whose meaning depends upon context.

It can refer to the Basque Autonomous Community in Spain or, in broader cultural and nationalist usage, to the historical Basque territories extending across the Spanish-French border.

Political disagreements concerning territory are therefore partly disagreements concerning which political geography is being discussed.

Moshe Reed Thought insists that territorial claims must remain subject to the consent and political agency of the people actually living in the territories concerned.

Basque Nationalism

A diverse family of political traditions asserting the distinct national identity of the Basque people and advocating various forms of political recognition, autonomy, sovereignty, or independence.

Basque nationalism is not one ideology.

It contains conservative, Christian democratic, socialist, revolutionary, social democratic, and other tendencies.

It must not be reduced to ETA.

Batasuna

A political organization associated historically with the radical Basque nationalist political environment.

Its legal and political history became deeply entangled with questions concerning the relationship between political organizations and ETA.

Moshe Reed Thought approaches such questions through the principle of individual and institutional evidence.

Political association should not be criminalized merely through broad cultural identity.

At the same time, organizations can be held accountable where unlawful coordination or material participation is established through lawful evidence.

Biltzar

A Basque term associated with an **assembly** or **gathering**.

The concept of assembly is particularly important to Moshe Reed Thought.

Political power should not exist only in distant institutions.

Local assemblies, workplace councils, cooperative boards, municipal bodies, and participatory institutions can create practical schools of self-government.

Ceasefire

A suspension of armed activity.

A ceasefire may be temporary, conditional, tactical, or part of a genuine process toward ending violence.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes between an **instrumental pause** and **transformative cessation**.

An instrumental pause asks how the break can improve a side's position within the conflict.

Transformative cessation asks how the actors can leave the logic of armed conflict.

Civil Resistance

Collective political action conducted without armed violence.

Civil resistance may include strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, non-cooperation, public campaigns, workplace organization, cultural mobilization, and other forms of mass participation.

Moshe Reed Thought favors civil resistance because it tends to distribute political agency more widely than clandestine armed action.

The objective is participation rather than substitution.

Commonwealth

Within Moshe Reed Thought, the commonwealth is a decentralized and participatory social order built through layered self-government and economic democracy.

Its principles include:

municipal democracy,

regional autonomy,

worker cooperatives,

community ownership,

public accountability,

cultural pluralism,

civil liberties,

federation,

subsidiarity,

and the right of peaceful political dissent.

The commonwealth is not a centralized command state.

Nor is it a society without public institutions.

It seeks to distribute power while maintaining the coordination necessary for complex social life.

Dirty War

The use of unlawful or clandestine methods by state-connected actors against perceived political enemies.

In the context of the Basque conflict, the term is particularly associated with GAL.

Moshe Reed Thought regards dirty-war methods as a form of reciprocal degradation.

The state claims to defend law while abandoning law.

In doing so, it strengthens the narrative of the armed organization it seeks to defeat.

Disarmament

The process through which an armed organization relinquishes weapons and abandons the material infrastructure of political violence.

Disarmament possesses both practical and symbolic meaning.

Practically, it reduces the capacity for renewed violence.

Symbolically, it abandons the claim that possession of weapons grants special political authority.

Dissolution

The formal ending of an organization's existence.

ETA formally dissolved in 2018.

Moshe Reed Thought interprets dissolution as an important reminder that institutions are temporary.

A political cause can continue after an organization ends.

No institution should confuse its own survival with the survival of the people or cause it claims to serve.

ETA

The abbreviation for Euskadi Ta Askatasuna.

The name is commonly translated as **Basque Homeland and Freedom**.

Founded in 1959 during the Franco dictatorship, ETA developed into an armed Basque nationalist and revolutionary organization.

Its history involved ideological evolution, internal divisions, armed attacks, assassinations, bombings, extortion, negotiations, ceasefires, declining political and strategic space, the definitive end of armed activity in 2011, disarmament in 2017, and dissolution in 2018.

Moshe Reed Thought interprets ETA historically rather than mythologically.

Its emergence must be understood within dictatorship and repression.

Its later actions must also be judged according to the changing political conditions in which they occurred.

Euskal Herria

A Basque term generally meaning the **land or country of the Basque language and people**.

The concept commonly refers to a broader cultural and historical Basque homeland extending across territories currently divided between Spain and France.

Its political meaning varies.

For some, it is primarily cultural.

For others, it has direct implications for national sovereignty and territorial unity.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes cultural identity from automatic political consent.

A cultural map does not determine a constitutional arrangement by itself.

Euskadi

A term referring to the Basque Country.

Its precise usage can vary according to political and historical context.

Different speakers may use it in narrower or broader territorial senses.

Understanding the intended meaning requires attention to context.

Euskara

The Basque language.

Euskara is a central element of Basque cultural identity and historical continuity.

The language experienced repression and restriction under Francoism and later underwent major institutional revival and normalization efforts.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes that cultural survival depends upon living institutions.

Schools.

Families.

Media.

Literature.

Music.

Public services.

Everyday speech.

A language survives through life rather than martyrdom.

Francoism

The authoritarian political system associated with Francisco Franco, who ruled Spain from the end of the Spanish Civil War until his death in 1975.

Francoism was characterized by authoritarian centralization, political repression, restrictions upon opposition, and policies that affected regional national identities and languages.

The dictatorship formed the essential political environment in which ETA emerged.

Understanding this context is necessary for explaining the organization's origins.

It does not provide automatic justification for every later action undertaken by the organization.

GAL

The abbreviation for Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación.

GAL was associated with an unlawful counterterrorist campaign during the 1980s involving kidnappings, torture, and killings directed against people believed to be associated with ETA or its environment.

The GAL scandal became a major example of state-connected unlawful violence.

Moshe Reed Thought uses GAL as a warning against the shadow sovereignty of the state.

A democratic government cannot defend law by secretly imitating the methods of clandestine violence.

Gudari

A Basque term meaning **soldier** or **warrior**, historically carrying strong associations with Basque armed struggle and wartime memory.

Political movements may invest the term with heroic and commemorative meaning.

Moshe Reed Thought warns against allowing military identity to become the exclusive model of political courage.

The teacher, cooperative worker, journalist, organizer, mediator, and dissenter can also embody courage.

Herri

A Basque word with meanings connected to **people**, **town**, **country**, or **community**, depending upon context.

The term illustrates the close relationship between people and place in many forms of Basque political vocabulary.

Moshe Reed Thought emphasizes that “the people” must never become merely an abstraction.

Actual people disagree.

The political community is plural.

Independence

The condition of possessing sovereign statehood separate from another state.

Basque independence has been advocated through different political traditions and strategies.

Moshe Reed Thought recognizes peaceful advocacy for independence as legitimate democratic politics.

It rejects the claim that independence automatically creates social liberation.

A new state can reproduce centralized power and economic domination.

The deeper question concerns the distribution of power within society.

Institutional Momentum

A concept used throughout this book to describe the tendency of an organization to continue because its structures, identities, resources, habits, and leadership roles have become invested in continuation.

Institutional momentum does not require a secret conspiracy.

Organizations naturally interpret reality through categories shaped by their own existence.

The ethical test is whether an institution can imagine a future in which it is no longer necessary.

Kale Borroka

A term generally translated as **street struggle** or **street fighting**, associated with forms of urban political violence and confrontation in the radical Basque nationalist environment.

The term has been used in relation to attacks on property, public infrastructure, political offices, and other targets.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes mass civil resistance from coercive political violence.

Public participation is strongest when people can act openly rather than through fear and clandestinity.

Martyrdom Politics

A Moshe Reed Thought term describing the political use of death and sacrifice as sources of organizational legitimacy.

The dead are remembered as requiring continuation of the struggle.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects this logic.

The dead deserve memory.

They cannot command the future.

The living remain responsible for present decisions.

National Liberation

A political concept referring to the emancipation of a people understood as nationally dominated, colonized, occupied, or denied self-determination.

ETA increasingly interpreted the Basque struggle through the language of national liberation.

Moshe Reed Thought recognizes the legitimacy of self-determination debates but rejects the assumption that an armed organization automatically becomes the authentic representative of the nation.

National Self-Determination

The principle that a people should possess meaningful authority over its political future.

The difficulty lies partly in defining the relevant political community.

Moshe Reed Thought approaches self-determination through democratic consent, minority protection, layered sovereignty, local autonomy, and peaceful constitutional revision.

No organization can simply declare itself the embodiment of the national will.

Negative Peace

The absence of active violence.

Negative peace is important.

People are no longer being attacked.

But Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes it from constructive peace.

Constructive peace includes:

trust,

accountability,

democratic participation,

institutional reform,

memory,

social reintegration,

economic security,

and the reduction of fear.

The absence of violence is the beginning of peace.

Not its complete form.

Political Prisoner

A contested term used for people imprisoned in connection with political conflict.

Different actors define the category differently.

Moshe Reed Thought insists upon two principles.

Political context matters.

Individual responsibility also matters.

A person imprisoned for peaceful political expression should not be treated the same as a person convicted of a serious violent offense.

At the same time, humane treatment and basic rights apply to every prisoner.

Plural Patriotism

A concept within Moshe Reed Thought describing love of homeland without compulsory political uniformity.

Plural patriotism allows a person to love culture, language, landscape, and community while accepting disagreement concerning constitutional arrangements.

It rejects the idea that one party or organization owns national authenticity.

Reconciliatory Memory

A Moshe Reed Thought concept describing remembrance directed toward truth and prevention rather than inherited vengeance.

Reconciliatory memory does not erase responsibility.

It does not create false equivalence.

It does not require victims to forgive.

It seeks to prevent the dead from being used as political ammunition for future violence.

Revolutionary Nationalism

A synthesis of national liberation politics with revolutionary social transformation.

Within ETA's historical development, revolutionary nationalism connected Basque independence with socialist and anti-imperialist ideas.

Moshe Reed Thought recognizes the analytical importance of this synthesis while rejecting the assumption that national and social liberation require armed vanguardism.

Revolutionary Tax

A term used by ETA for coercively demanded payments associated with financing the organization and its activities.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the legitimizing language surrounding such demands.

A payment made under threat is not solidarity.

The practice is interpreted in this book as an expression of shadow sovereignty.

The organization claims fiscal authority without democratic authorization or public accountability.

Shadow Sovereignty

A Moshe Reed Thought concept describing the exercise of state-like power outside accountable democratic institutions.

An armed organization may exercise shadow sovereignty by collecting money through coercion, gathering intelligence, imposing punishment, and claiming territorial authority.

A state may also create shadow sovereignty through secret unlawful structures operating beyond public law.

The concept therefore applies to both revolutionary and state power.

Spanish Transition

The period of political transformation following the death of Francisco Franco in 1975, during which Spain moved toward parliamentary democracy and a new constitutional order.

The transition involved reform, negotiation, conflict, uncertainty, and institutional continuity as well as change.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects both idealization and dismissal of the transition.

It created meaningful democratic openings while leaving difficult historical and institutional questions.

Statute of Autonomy

A legal framework defining the self-governing powers of an autonomous community within Spain.

The Basque Statute of Autonomy became a major institutional foundation of Basque self-government.

Moshe Reed Thought views autonomy as a practical structure to be evaluated by the real distribution of power.

The question is not whether autonomy is rhetorically perfect.

The question is what communities can actually decide and how participation can be deepened.

Substitutionism

A central critical concept in Moshe Reed Thought.

Substitutionism occurs when an organization substitutes itself for the people it claims to represent.

The party substitutes for the class.

The bureaucracy substitutes for the party.

The leader substitutes for the movement.

The armed organization substitutes for the nation.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects substitutionism because liberation requires increased popular agency rather than the concentration of agency in a self-appointed vanguard.

Terrorism

A politically contested term generally associated with violence or threats of violence intended to intimidate or coerce populations, institutions, or governments for political purposes.

The term is often used inconsistently in political conflict.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore emphasizes analysis of specific actions rather than reliance upon labels alone.

Who was targeted?

What method was used?

Who was harmed?

What political purpose was pursued?

What alternatives existed?

Specific moral analysis is stronger than propaganda vocabulary.

The Democratic Test

A concept used in this book to describe the challenge faced by a liberation movement when people gain the ability to express diverse political preferences through meaningful political participation.

Can the movement accept that the people may choose differently from what the movement believes history requires?

If yes, it can become democratic politics.

If no, it becomes guardianship over the people.

The Right of Refusal

A foundational principle of Moshe Reed Thought.

A political or social relationship should be judged partly by whether a person can safely say no.

Can the worker organize?

Can the citizen criticize government?

Can the nationalist reject armed struggle?

Can the non-nationalist express disagreement?

Can the believer leave a religious institution?

Can the member criticize leadership?

Can the recipient reject a political organization's financial demand without fear?

The ability to refuse reveals the real structure of power.

Txapela

The traditional Basque beret.

Although primarily a cultural rather than political term, it has strong associations with Basque identity and public symbolism.

Moshe Reed Thought distinguishes cultural symbols from compulsory political meaning.

A cultural object belongs to a people more broadly than to any single ideology.

Violence as Climate

A Moshe Reed Thought concept describing the way prolonged political violence shapes society beyond individual attacks.

People alter routines.

Avoid topics.

Hide opinions.

Change routes.

Leave communities.

Accept security practices.

Distrust institutions.

Fear becomes environmental.

The end of attacks is therefore only the first stage of recovery.

Vanguard

A revolutionary concept referring to an advanced political organization or group that claims a leading role in revolutionary struggle.

Moshe Reed Thought criticizes permanent vanguardism.

Political education and leadership can be necessary.

But leadership must increase the capacity of people to govern themselves.

The teacher succeeds when students become capable.

The organizer succeeds when communities can organize.

The revolutionary organization should not require permanent dependence upon itself.

Concluding Glossary Principle

Political language is never neutral.

Words carry history.

Homeland.

Freedom.

Security.

Revolution.

Terrorism.

Order.

Resistance.

Nation.

People.

Each can clarify.

Each can also conceal.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore asks the reader to look beneath the word.

When someone says freedom, ask:

Freedom for whom?

When someone says security, ask:

Security from what, and under whose authority?

When someone says the people, ask:

Which actual people, and how were their views determined?

When someone says necessity, ask:

Necessary for human beings, or necessary for the survival of an institution?

When someone says solidarity, ask:

Can participation be refused safely?

When someone says revolution, ask:

Does the method increase or decrease ordinary people's capacity to govern their lives?

When someone says peace, ask:

Is there only silence, or is there freedom from fear?

Language can hide power.

The task of political thought is to make power visible.

Appendix III

Core Principles of Moshe Reed Thought Applied to National Liberation Movements

National liberation movements emerge from different histories.

Colonial rule.

Military occupation.

Cultural repression.

Forced assimilation.

Unequal development.

Political exclusion.

Disputed borders.

Centralized government.

Economic exploitation.

Settler conflict.

Language suppression.

These conditions cannot be collapsed into a single universal model.

A movement resisting foreign colonial administration is not historically identical to a regional nationalist movement operating inside a democratic constitutional state.

A movement under military dictatorship is not operating under the same conditions as a peaceful independence party contesting elections.

Context matters.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore rejects formulas that automatically sanctify or condemn every national liberation movement.

Instead, it proposes principles for examining movements concretely.

The central question is:

Does the struggle increase the capacity of actual people to govern their own lives, or does it replace one structure of domination with another?

Principle I

The Grievance Must Be Examined Honestly

Every serious analysis begins with the grievance.

What happened?

Was a language suppressed?

Were political organizations prohibited?

Was land confiscated?

Were elections denied?

Was a population subjected to military rule?

Were economic resources extracted without meaningful local participation?

Were communities displaced?

Moshe Reed Thought rejects propaganda history.

A state's wrongdoing should not be minimized merely because one opposes the movement resisting it.

Likewise, the movement's claims should not be accepted without evidence merely because the language of liberation is emotionally powerful.

Truth comes before loyalty.

Principle II

Explanation Is Not Justification

Understanding why violence emerges does not automatically justify violence.

A person can understand radicalization without endorsing every radical action.

A historian can explain why a movement gained support while condemning particular methods.

Moshe Reed Thought insists upon this distinction because political camps frequently confuse understanding with approval.

The refusal to understand produces shallow history.

The refusal to judge produces moral emptiness.

Both understanding and judgment are necessary.

Principle III

No Organization Owns a People

A nation is larger than any party.

A class is larger than any revolutionary organization.

A religion is larger than any institution.

A liberation movement may possess genuine support.

It may possess deep roots.

It may make enormous sacrifices.

None of this makes it identical with the people.

Actual populations contain disagreement.

A national movement must accept the existence of:

supporters,

moderates,

federalists,

autonomists,

independence advocates,

non-nationalists,

migrants,

minorities,

politically indifferent people,

and people who change their minds.

The people are plural.

Any movement claiming exclusive ownership of national authenticity has already begun replacing liberation with guardianship.

Principle IV

The People Must Be Allowed to Reject Their Liberators

This is the democratic test.

A movement says it represents the people.

Can the people reject it?

Can they criticize it?

Can they vote against it?

Can they refuse financial support?

Can they organize a rival political tendency?

Can they reject independence?

Can they support independence while rejecting the movement's strategy?

If the answer is no, the movement does not represent free self-determination.

It represents compulsory representation.

Moshe Reed Thought considers the freedom to reject the liberator one of the highest tests of authentic liberation.

Principle V

Cultural Survival Is a Present-Tense Task

A threatened language cannot wait for the final political settlement.

A cultural tradition cannot wait for revolution.

Build schools.

Publish books.

Create music.

Support families using the language.

Develop media.

Establish cultural associations.

Create archives.

Train teachers.

Make public services accessible.

A movement that claims to defend culture should demonstrate that commitment through cultural construction.

The survival of a people depends more upon living institutions than upon military symbolism.

Principle VI

Political Sovereignty Is Not Sufficient

Independence may be a legitimate democratic objective.

But independence alone does not guarantee freedom.

A new state may reproduce:

economic inequality,

bureaucratic centralization,

police abuse,

minority exclusion,

oligarchic ownership,

media concentration,

and distant administration.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore distinguishes national sovereignty from human freedom.

A flag can change while the worker remains powerless.

A border can change while housing remains unaffordable.

A new capital city can replace an old capital city while municipalities remain weak.

The deeper revolution concerns the distribution of power.

Principle VII

Economic Democracy Must Accompany Political Liberation

National liberation without economic transformation may transfer control from one elite to another.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore emphasizes:

worker cooperatives,

trade unions,

community land ownership,

public banking,

social housing,

municipal enterprises,

regional development institutions,

and democratic planning.

The economy should not remain outside democracy.

If people are citizens politically but subjects economically, liberation remains incomplete.

Principle VIII

Armed Struggle Must Never Become Sacred

A tactic is not a religion.

If conditions change, strategy must be capable of changing.

A movement that cannot reconsider armed struggle has transformed a method into an identity.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the theology of violence.

Weapons do not possess revolutionary wisdom.

Martyrdom does not prove political correctness.

Sacrifice does not guarantee strategic effectiveness.

A movement must continuously ask whether its methods still serve human liberation.

Principle IX

Civilians Must Never Become Material

The civilian is not a statistical inconvenience.

The civilian is not collateral for history.

The civilian is a person.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects political strategies that knowingly treat ordinary people as expendable material.

The liberation of a population cannot be built through indifference toward the lives of that population.

When methods repeatedly harm those supposedly being liberated, the strategy itself must be judged.

Principle X

Coercion Cannot Be Renamed Solidarity

A movement may require money.

But financial necessity does not create moral entitlement.

A payment made under threat is not a donation.

It is not solidarity.

It is coercion.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects revolutionary taxation imposed by unaccountable clandestine organizations.

A liberation movement should finance social transformation through voluntary membership, cooperative institutions, unions, mutual aid, transparent fundraising, and accountable public mechanisms where democratic authority exists.

Principle XI

The Enemy's Wrongdoing Does Not Purify Your Own

This principle applies to movements and states alike.

State repression does not automatically justify terrorism.

Terrorism does not justify torture.

Occupation does not justify indiscriminate violence.

Revolutionary violence does not justify death squads.

The wrongdoing of an opponent does not create moral immunity.

Moshe Reed Thought calls the opposite process reciprocal degradation.

Each side points to the other.

Each becomes worse.

The cycle ends only when actors accept responsibility for their own methods.

Principle XII

Peaceful Political Space Must Be Tested Honestly

When political conditions change, movements must change their analysis.

Are elections meaningful?

Can parties organize?

Can independence be advocated publicly?

Can unions operate?

Can cultural institutions function?

Can people protest?

Can regional institutions exercise real power?

These questions require concrete answers.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects both naive faith in formal democracy and dogmatic denial of democratic change.

An imperfect opening must be tested.

If peaceful political action becomes possible, armed methods face a fundamentally different burden of justification.

Principle XIII

Partial Victories Are Real

A movement may seek independence and achieve autonomy.

It may seek socialism and achieve worker representation.

It may seek complete language revival and achieve bilingual education.

These gains are incomplete.

They are not meaningless.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects revolutionary maximalism.

Human beings live during the transition.

A child educated in a protected language has experienced a real gain.

A worker gaining cooperative ownership has experienced a real gain.

A municipality gaining authority has experienced a real gain.

The future is constructed through accumulated capacity.

Principle XIV

Leadership Must Create More Leaders

A healthy movement distributes knowledge.

It trains organizers.

Encourages debate.

Develops institutions.

Allows criticism.

Prepares people for self-government.

An unhealthy movement centralizes information and treats ordinary members as instruments.

Moshe Reed Thought defines leadership as the production of capacity.

The organizer succeeds when the community becomes capable of organizing without permanent dependence upon the organizer.

The movement should create citizens, not followers.

Principle XV

The Movement Must Be Capable of Ending

No institution should possess a metaphysical right to survival.

A movement may succeed.

Fail.

Transform.

Merge.

Become a political party.

Become a cultural association.

Become a historical archive.

Or dissolve.

The organization must never confuse itself with the cause.

A people can continue after a movement ends.

A language can survive after a party disappears.

An independence campaign can continue after an armed organization dissolves.

Institutional humility is necessary for political freedom.

Principle XVI

Memory Must Serve Life

National liberation movements often possess powerful martyr traditions.

The dead are remembered as symbols of sacrifice.

Moshe Reed Thought respects memory while rejecting the weaponization of memory.

The question should not be:

How can the dead justify continuation?

The question should be:

What can the living learn?

Memory should create responsibility.

Not inherited vengeance.

Principle XVII

Negotiation Is Not Betrayal

Talking with an enemy does not mean agreeing with the enemy.

A ceasefire does not erase the past.

Negotiation can be necessary to end violence.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects purity politics that values continued suffering more than imperfect dialogue.

At the same time, armed organizations cannot negotiate the political future of an entire population without democratic consent.

Peace negotiations can address the ending of violence.

The people must decide the constitutional future.

Principle XVIII

Disarmament Is the Return of Political Equality

The armed actor possesses a form of political privilege.

It can impose consequences unavailable to ordinary citizens.

Disarmament removes this privilege.

The former armed movement enters politics under the same fundamental conditions as others:

persuade,

organize,

campaign,

vote,

lose,

reorganize,

and try again.

Moshe Reed Thought interprets this not as political death but political equality.

Principle XIX

The Goal Is Not Permanent Mobilization

A liberation movement may become accustomed to emergency.

Meetings.

Security.

Discipline.

Sacrifice.

Constant struggle.

But ordinary people do not exist to remain permanently mobilized.

The purpose of liberation is a life beyond permanent emergency.

Work with dignity.

Family.

Culture.

Friendship.

Education.

Art.

Leisure.

Political participation without fear.

The movement must remember what liberation is for.

Principle XX

The Commonwealth Is the Measure

The final measure of national liberation is not merely whether a new state exists.

The measure is whether power has been democratized.

Can people govern locally?

Can workers influence economic life?

Can minorities live safely?

Can political opponents speak?

Can institutions be changed peacefully?

Can the press investigate power?

Can citizens organize independently?

Can cultural communities survive without coercion?

Can the individual say no?

The commonwealth is the social condition in which power is distributed and participation becomes ordinary.

A Twenty-Point Moshe Reed Test for Liberation Movements

When evaluating a national liberation movement, ask:

1. Is the historical grievance supported by evidence?
2. Does the movement distinguish explanation from justification?

3. Does it accept that no organization owns the people?
4. Can people safely reject the movement?
5. Does the movement build cultural institutions?
6. Does it distinguish statehood from freedom?
7. Does it promote economic democracy?
8. Can it reconsider its methods?
9. Does it protect civilians?
10. Is financial support genuinely voluntary?
11. Does it condemn wrongdoing by its own side?
12. Does it adapt honestly to changing political conditions?
13. Can it recognize partial victories?
14. Does leadership distribute knowledge and power?
15. Can the organization imagine becoming unnecessary?
16. Does memory serve reconciliation or renewed mobilization?
17. Can the movement negotiate without treating dialogue as betrayal?
18. Can it enter peaceful politics without retaining coercive privilege?
19. Does it seek ordinary human flourishing rather than permanent mobilization?
20. Does its practice build a democratic commonwealth?

No movement will answer every question perfectly.

The purpose of the test is not moral purity.

It is political accountability.

Final Principle

National liberation is legitimate only when the nation being liberated remains composed of free human beings rather than becoming an abstraction above them.

The nation cannot be liberated by silencing the nation.

The people cannot be represented by removing their ability to refuse representation.

The worker cannot be liberated by a bureaucracy that commands the worker.

Culture cannot be preserved by turning identity into a loyalty test.

Peace cannot be created by forgetting truth.

Justice cannot be built upon selective morality.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore defines liberation as the expansion of human agency through democratic, cultural, economic, and communal institutions.

The movement must not merely promise freedom.

Its structure must practice freedom.

Its methods must expand participation.

Its leadership must distribute power.

Its memory must serve life.

Its institutions must remain temporary.

Its people must remain free to disagree.

That is the difference between liberation as slogan and liberation as commonwealth.

Appendix IV

Moshe Reed's Twenty Theses on Revolution, Nation, and Commonwealth

These twenty theses summarize the political philosophy developed throughout this study.

They are not presented as a rigid doctrine.

They are propositions for judgment.

They emerge from the historical study of nationalism, revolutionary organization, state power, armed struggle, democratic transition, institutional failure, social memory, and the difficult movement from conflict toward ordinary political life.

The central concern of Moshe Reed Thought is power.

Who possesses it?

How is it justified?

Who can challenge it?

Who benefits from it?

Who suffers under it?

Can it be withdrawn?

Can the institution be changed?

Can the person say no?

Every political system should be examined through these questions.

Thesis I

No Cause Is Made Just by the Suffering of Its Followers

Sacrifice proves commitment.

It does not prove correctness.

People have suffered for true causes.

People have also suffered for mistaken causes.

Martyrdom cannot replace analysis.

A movement must be judged by its goals, methods, institutions, and consequences.

The dead deserve memory.

They do not automatically provide the living with political instructions.

Thesis II

A Real Grievance Does Not Justify Every Response

Oppression can be real.

Cultural repression can be real.

Political exclusion can be real.

Economic exploitation can be real.

State violence can be real.

But the existence of injustice does not abolish moral responsibility.

The oppressed remain human agents.

The revolutionary remains responsible for choices.

Understanding the origin of violence is necessary.

Justifying every act committed in response is not.

Thesis III

The Nation Exists for Human Beings

A nation is a historical community.

It may possess language, memory, territory, culture, institutions, and shared identity.

These are real human goods.

But the nation is not a god.

The person cannot be sacrificed automatically to national destiny.

The dissenter remains part of the human community.

The minority retains dignity.

The migrant can become a neighbor.

The nation should create belonging.

Not compulsory uniformity.

Thesis IV

No Organization Owns the People

The party is not the class.

The army is not the nation.

The government is not the country.

The church is not God.

The corporation is not the community.

The movement is not the people.

Institutions are temporary arrangements created by human beings.

They may serve.

They may fail.

They may become corrupt.

They may become unnecessary.

The people always remain larger than the institution.

Thesis V

The Right to Refuse Is the Beginning of Freedom

Can the worker refuse an abusive order?

Can the citizen criticize the government?

Can the believer leave a religious institution?

Can the member criticize the party?

Can the nationalist oppose the armed organization?

Can the community reject the development project?

Can the voter remove leadership?

Can the individual say no without facing unlawful punishment?

Where refusal is impossible, domination exists.

Freedom begins with the protected possibility of dissent.

Thesis VI

Democracy Must Enter the Economy

Political democracy without economic democracy is incomplete.

A person may vote periodically while spending most waking hours inside an authoritarian workplace.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore supports the expansion of democratic principles into economic life.

Worker cooperatives.

Strong unions.

Employee representation.

Community ownership.

Public accountability.

Democratic planning where appropriate.

The economy is not a natural force outside politics.

It is a network of human institutions.

Those institutions can be changed.

Thesis VII

Revolution Must Be Practiced Before Victory

A movement cannot become democratic by magic after achieving power.

The habits of struggle shape the institutions that follow.

If the movement practices secrecy, unquestioned command, personality cult, and suppression of dissent, these tendencies do not disappear automatically after victory.

The future must be practiced in the present.

Build assemblies.

Build cooperatives.

Build accountable leadership.

Build cultural institutions.

Build habits of criticism.

The revolution begins through construction.

Thesis VIII

The Vanguard Must Become Unnecessary

Leadership can be necessary.

Organization can be necessary.

Political education can be necessary.

But permanent dependence is domination.

The organizer should create organizers.

The teacher should create thinkers.

The institution should create capacity.

The vanguard that cannot imagine the people acting without it has ceased to liberate.

It has become a guardian.

The highest success of leadership is distributed competence.

Thesis IX

Violence Is a Tool, Not a Sacrament

Violence should never be romanticized.

The weapon does not purify the person holding it.

Sacrifice does not guarantee wisdom.

Death does not automatically create meaning.

Movements that turn violence into sacred identity become incapable of strategic and moral change.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the theology of violence.

Methods must always remain subject to judgment.

Thesis X

The State Must Obey the Laws It Claims to Defend

A democratic state destroys its legitimacy when it creates secret exceptions for itself.

Torture cannot defend democracy.

Death squads cannot defend law.

Unaccountable surveillance cannot permanently protect liberty.

The state possesses greater resources than ordinary citizens.

Therefore, it carries greater institutional responsibility.

The wrongdoing of an enemy does not grant the state permission to become lawless.

Thesis XI

Civilians Are Never Historical Material

The civilian is not an abstraction.

Not collateral.

Not an unfortunate variable.

Not a necessary sacrifice for consciousness.

Every political theory must return to the person.

A child is not a strategic category.

A worker is not expendable because history has been declared revolutionary.

A passerby does not owe death to a cause.

Political goals must remain subordinate to human dignity.

Thesis XII

Fear Cannot Produce Legitimate Consent

A payment made under threat is not solidarity.

A vote cast under coercion is not democracy.

A confession produced through torture is not truth.

Silence produced through intimidation is not agreement.

Fear can produce behavior.

It cannot produce legitimate consent.

Political institutions must therefore be judged by the conditions under which participation occurs.

Thesis XIII

The Enemy Must Not Become Your Teacher

Prolonged conflict creates imitation.

The revolutionary copies the state's coercive hierarchy.

The state copies the revolutionary's clandestinity.

Each side becomes organized around the other.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects reciprocal degradation.

The opponent's wrongdoing must not determine the limits of one's own morality.

The question is not:

What did they do first?

The question is:

What are we becoming?

Thesis XIV

Partial Freedom Is Still Freedom

A partial victory is not necessarily a betrayal.

A language school matters.

A municipal reform matters.

A cooperative matters.

A regional parliament matters.

A labor victory matters.

A housing trust matters.

These do not complete liberation.

But they increase human capacity.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects the politics that sacrifices every present improvement to an imagined final victory.

People live now.

Freedom must begin now.

Thesis XV

Political Defeat Must Remain Survivable

A democratic society requires the possibility of losing.

A party loses an election.

A campaign fails.

A referendum produces an unwanted result.

A strike ends without full victory.

The organization must survive politically without reaching for coercion.

The ability to lose peacefully is one of the highest forms of democratic discipline.

A system in which every political defeat becomes existential will eventually produce violence.

Thesis XVI

Memory Must Illuminate Rather Than Command

History should be remembered.

Victims should be named.

Documents should be preserved.

Abuses should be investigated.

But the dead should not become commanders of the living.

Memory must teach.

It must not create hereditary enemies.

The child should inherit knowledge of the conflict.

Not an obligation to continue it.

Thesis XVII

Peace Is More Than Silence

A society may have no bombings and still live with fear.

People may remain silent.

Families may remain divided.

Institutions may remain distrusted.

Victims may remain unrecognized.

Former militants may remain socially excluded.

Peace requires construction.

Truth.

Accountability.

Reintegration.

Democratic participation.

Economic security.

Cultural confidence.

The absence of violence is the doorway to peace.

Not the entire house.

Thesis XVIII

Institutions Must Be Capable of Dying

Every institution seeks survival.

This tendency must be resisted.

A party can become unnecessary.

An armed organization can dissolve.

A bureaucracy can be abolished.

A program can end.

A movement can transform.

Institutional mortality is healthy.

Human beings should never be sacrificed merely because an institution wants to continue existing.

The institution serves life.

Life does not serve the institution.

Thesis XIX

The Commonwealth Is Built From Below

The commonwealth begins with human-scale institutions.

The household.

The neighborhood.

The workplace.

The cooperative.

The municipality.

The region.

The federation.

Power should remain as close as practical to the people affected by decisions.

Higher institutions should coordinate what lower institutions cannot manage alone.

This is subsidiarity joined with solidarity.

Localism without isolation.

Federation without domination.

Coordination without unnecessary centralization.

Thesis XX

The Purpose of Revolution Is to End the Need for Revolution

A successful transformation should not create permanent emergency.

The people should not remain eternally mobilized.

The secret cell should become unnecessary.

The weapon should become unnecessary.

The vanguard should become unnecessary.

Extraordinary authority should become unnecessary.

Ordinary people should become capable of governing ordinary life.

This is the final revolutionary measure.

Not permanent struggle.

Not permanent sacrifice.

Not permanent enemies.

The purpose of revolution is a society capable of changing itself without requiring catastrophe.

The Twenty Theses in Brief

1. Sacrifice does not prove correctness.
2. A real grievance does not justify every response.
3. The nation exists for human beings.
4. No organization owns the people.
5. The right to refuse is the beginning of freedom.
6. Democracy must enter the economy.
7. Revolution must be practiced before victory.
8. The vanguard must become unnecessary.
9. Violence is a tool, not a sacrament.
10. The state must obey the laws it claims to defend.
11. Civilians are never historical material.
12. Fear cannot produce legitimate consent.
13. The enemy must not become your teacher.
14. Partial freedom is still freedom.
15. Political defeat must remain survivable.
16. Memory must illuminate rather than command.
17. Peace is more than silence.
18. Institutions must be capable of dying.
19. The commonwealth is built from below.
20. The purpose of revolution is to end the need for revolution.

Concluding Declaration

Moshe Reed Thought stands against the worship of institutions.

Against the worship of the state.

Against the worship of the nation.

Against the worship of the party.

Against the worship of the market.

Against the worship of the weapon.

It does not reject organization.

It demands accountable organization.

It does not reject national identity.

It demands plural national identity.

It does not reject public authority.

It demands democratic public authority.

It does not reject revolutionary transformation.

It demands transformation that increases human agency rather than replacing one ruling minority with another.

The central political struggle is therefore not merely between left and right.

Nor simply between state and revolution.

Nor nation and empire.

Nor market and planning.

The deeper struggle is between concentrated power and distributed agency.

Between institutions that require obedience and institutions that cultivate participation.

Between politics conducted for people and politics conducted by people.

The commonwealth begins wherever power becomes answerable.

Where the worker becomes a participant.

Where the citizen becomes more than a spectator.

Where the community gains meaningful capacity.

Where culture lives without becoming compulsory.

Where memory teaches without commanding vengeance.

Where political defeat can be survived.

Where institutions can end.

Where leaders can be criticized.

Where the person can say no.

This is not the end of politics.

It is the beginning of mature politics.

The gun promises a shortcut.

The centralized state promises order.

The market promises automatic coordination.

The vanguard promises historical knowledge.

Moshe Reed Thought promises none of these certainties.

It offers a harder principle:

Human beings must learn to govern shared life together without surrendering themselves to the institutions they create.

That is the unfinished revolution.

That is the commonwealth.

Appendix V

A Moshe Reed Commonwealth Program for National and Regional Self-Government

A national question cannot be resolved by slogans alone.

Independence.

Autonomy.

Federalism.

Confederation.

Unity.

Self-determination.

These words describe possible political arrangements, but none automatically guarantees human freedom.

A centralized independent state can dominate its municipalities.

An autonomous region can reproduce economic oligarchy.

A federal state can be democratic in law but unequal in practice.

A revolutionary movement can speak in the name of national liberation while concentrating authority in a small leadership.

Moshe Reed Thought therefore begins from a different question:

What arrangement gives ordinary people the greatest practical capacity to participate in the political, economic, cultural, and communal decisions shaping their lives?

The commonwealth program does not treat the nation-state as the only possible form of political organization.

It proposes layered sovereignty.

The person belongs simultaneously to multiple communities.

A neighborhood.

A municipality.

A region.

A linguistic community.

A cultural community.

A federation.

Humanity.

These relationships need not be forced into a single centralized hierarchy.

The purpose of the commonwealth is coordination without domination.

Autonomy without isolation.

Solidarity without uniformity.

Part I

The Constitutional Foundation

Article 1 — Popular Sovereignty

All legitimate political authority originates in the people affected by its exercise.

No party, military institution, armed organization, religious body, corporation, bureaucracy, or hereditary authority may claim permanent ownership of sovereignty.

Political institutions exist as delegated instruments.

The people remain the source of legitimacy.

Article 2 — The Right of Democratic Self-Government

Distinct national and regional communities possess the right to pursue self-government through peaceful democratic means.

This may include advocacy for:

expanded autonomy,

federalism,

confederation,

constitutional association,

or independence.

No peaceful constitutional position shall be criminalized merely because it challenges the existing territorial arrangement.

Political unity must be defended through persuasion and democratic legitimacy rather than repression.

Article 3 — The Principle of Consent

No territorial settlement is morally legitimate merely because it is historically inherited.

At the same time, no nationalist movement may claim territory without considering the political agency of the actual populations living there.

Territorial change should therefore involve:

public debate,

democratic consultation,

minority protections,

negotiated transition,

and clear constitutional procedures.

The map is not more sacred than the people living upon it.

Article 4 — Layered Sovereignty

Sovereignty should be distributed across multiple levels.

The municipality governs local matters.

The region governs regional matters.

The federation coordinates matters requiring wider cooperation.

The workplace governs appropriate areas of economic life.

The community participates in decisions affecting land, housing, and development.

Authority should move upward only when the scale of the problem requires it.

Article 5 — Constitutional Revision Without Violence

Every constitutional system should contain peaceful procedures for substantial change.

A constitution that makes meaningful reform practically impossible creates pressure outside constitutional politics.

Therefore, democratic societies should provide lawful mechanisms for:

regional reform,

autonomy negotiation,

federal restructuring,

constitutional amendment,

and legitimate consultation concerning political status.

The purpose is not to guarantee a particular outcome.

It is to guarantee that political questions can be addressed without weapons.

Part II

Municipal Democracy

Article 6 — The Municipality as the Foundation

The municipality should be the primary school of democratic citizenship.

Citizens should encounter democracy not only during national elections but through regular participation in local affairs.

Municipal authority should include meaningful power over:

local planning,

public space,

community services,

local transportation,

housing policy within constitutional limits,

public markets,

cultural programming,

and participatory budgeting.

A powerless municipality produces passive citizenship.

Article 7 — Participatory Budgeting

A meaningful portion of municipal spending should be subject to direct public participation.

Residents should be able to propose, debate, and prioritize community projects.

Participatory budgeting teaches practical democracy.

People learn that public money is not an abstraction.

It represents collective choices.

Article 8 — Neighborhood Assemblies

Larger municipalities should support neighborhood assemblies or councils.

These bodies should have transparent procedures and defined relationships with municipal government.

They may address:

public safety concerns,

parks,

local development,

community events,

transportation needs,

and neighborhood infrastructure.

The objective is not endless meetings.

It is accessible participation.

Article 9 — Municipal Transparency

Public decisions should be understandable.

Budgets should be accessible.

Contracts should be reviewable.

Conflicts of interest should be disclosed.

Public meetings should be documented.

Citizens should not require specialized insider knowledge to understand how local power operates.

Transparency is the enemy of both corruption and political mythology.

Part III

Regional Self-Government

Article 10 — Strong Regional Institutions

Regions with distinct historical, linguistic, cultural, or political identities should possess meaningful self-government where democratically desired.

Regional authority may include:

education,

culture,

language policy,

health administration,

regional infrastructure,

economic development,

environmental policy,

and appropriate forms of taxation.

Autonomy without resources is symbolic.

Political responsibility requires fiscal capacity.

Article 11 — Regional Fiscal Responsibility

A self-governing region should possess meaningful revenue authority.

But fiscal autonomy must be joined to social solidarity.

Wealthier territories should not use autonomy as an excuse to abandon poorer communities.

The commonwealth principle combines self-government with negotiated redistribution.

Autonomy and solidarity are not enemies.

Article 12 — Interregional Cooperation

Regions should be free to establish cooperative institutions for matters of shared concern.

Transportation.

Watersheds.

Energy systems.

Language communities.

Trade.

Universities.

Environmental protection.

Cultural exchange.

The political world need not be organized entirely through rigid vertical hierarchy.

Horizontal cooperation between regions should be encouraged.

Part IV

Cultural and Linguistic Freedom

Article 13 — Language Rights

A language community should possess the institutional means necessary for cultural survival.

This may include:

education,

media,

public services,

literature,

cultural funding,

translation,

archives,

and linguistic research.

Language policy should aim at cultural vitality rather than humiliation of another language community.

Cultural revival should create confidence.

Not revenge.

Article 14 — Voluntary Cultural Belonging

No person should be forced to prove national authenticity.

Ancestry does not create superior citizenship.

Language proficiency should be encouraged and supported where culturally important, but cultural identity should remain open to participation and learning.

The commonwealth nation is civic enough to welcome and historical enough to remember.

Article 15 — Protection of Internal Minorities

Every national community contains minorities.

A region demanding rights from a larger state must protect minorities within its own territory.

Otherwise, self-determination becomes hypocrisy.

Minorities should retain:

civil equality,

political participation,

language protections where appropriate,

freedom of association,

religious freedom,

and protection from discrimination.

A liberated majority cannot become a new dominant center.

Part V

Economic Democracy

Article 16 — Worker Cooperatives

Public policy should encourage worker ownership.

This may include:

technical assistance,

cooperative development banks,

education,

preferential procurement policies where lawful,

succession assistance for retiring business owners,

and financing for worker buyouts.

The purpose is not forced collectivization.

It is the creation of viable democratic alternatives to concentrated ownership.

Article 17 — The Right of Workers to Organize

Workers must possess meaningful rights to organize.

A democratic society cannot tolerate political citizenship combined with economic intimidation.

Workers should be able to:

form unions,

bargain collectively,

elect representatives,

report unsafe conditions,

and participate in workplace governance.

Democracy should not stop at the factory gate or office door.

Article 18 — Community Land Institutions

Housing and land should not be treated solely as speculative commodities.

Municipalities and communities should be empowered to develop:

community land trusts,

cooperative housing,

public housing,

limited-equity housing,

and anti-displacement measures.

Political freedom is fragile when people can be economically expelled from their communities.

Article 19 — Regional Development Banks

Regions should be able to establish accountable public or cooperative financial institutions supporting long-term productive development.

Financing priorities may include:

cooperatives,

small enterprises,

housing,

renewable energy,

infrastructure,

agriculture,

and community development.

Credit is a form of social power.

Its allocation should not remain completely detached from democratic goals.

Article 20 — Anti-Oligarchy Measures

National liberation without limits upon concentrated economic power can produce flag independence combined with oligarchic dependence.

The commonwealth therefore supports lawful measures against excessive concentrations of economic power.

Competition policy.

Transparency.

Anti-corruption institutions.

Worker organization.

Cooperative alternatives.

Public options where necessary.

Political democracy requires economic pluralism.

Part VI

Public Safety and the Rule of Law

Article 21 — Accountable Policing

Police institutions must remain accountable to law.

Public safety personnel should receive professional training, clear rules, independent oversight, and effective mechanisms for investigating misconduct.

Torture is prohibited.

Secret punishment is prohibited.

Collective retaliation is prohibited.

A democratic society cannot defend itself by abandoning its own principles.

Article 22 — Civilian Oversight

Security institutions should be subject to meaningful civilian oversight.

Oversight bodies must possess sufficient independence and investigative capacity to perform their function.

Public trust cannot be demanded.

It must be earned through conduct.

Article 23 — Individual Responsibility

Responsibility for crimes is individual.

Families are not guilty by association.

Ethnic groups are not guilty by association.

Political communities are not collectively criminal.

Legal accountability should focus upon evidence concerning specific persons and acts.

Collective suspicion produces permanent conflict.

Article 24 — Reintegration

A post-conflict society must create lawful paths for reintegration.

Former militants who abandon violence should be able to return to ordinary social and political life according to applicable legal processes.

Reintegration does not erase responsibility for serious crimes.

It recognizes that permanent social exclusion can reproduce conflict.

Peace requires the possibility of human transformation.

Part VII

Democratic Political Conflict

Article 25 — Freedom of Constitutional Advocacy

Citizens should be free to advocate peacefully for constitutional unity, autonomy, federalism, confederation, or independence.

The state should not criminalize peaceful constitutional advocacy.

Movements should not intimidate opponents.

The future must be argued.

Not imposed.

Article 26 — No Armed Political Privilege

No organization may maintain weapons as leverage within democratic political competition.

Political actors must compete through:

speech,

organization,

campaigning,

elections,

strikes,

peaceful protest,

civil resistance,

and institution-building.

The weapon cannot become a second ballot available only to those willing to use violence.

Article 27 — The Right to Lose

Every political movement must accept the possibility of defeat.

An independence referendum may fail.

A federal reform may fail.

A socialist party may lose an election.

A conservative government may be voted out.

Democracy requires political defeat to remain survivable.

Today's minority may organize to become tomorrow's majority.

Article 28 — Internal Democracy

Political organizations should practice the values they claim to seek.

Leadership elections.

Financial transparency.

Internal debate.

Protection of dissent.

Clear procedures.

No movement can credibly promise democratic society while practicing authoritarian internal culture.

Part VIII

Memory, Education, and Reconciliation

Article 29 — Historical Truth

Public institutions should support serious historical research.

Archives should be preserved.

Victims should be documented.

State abuses should be investigated.

Armed organizations should be studied critically.

History should not become a branch of factional propaganda.

A society capable of truth is less vulnerable to mythology.

Article 30 — Victim Recognition

Victims should be recognized as persons rather than political resources.

Their experiences should not be erased because they complicate a preferred narrative.

Nor should victims be forced into political positions they do not hold.

Recognition should preserve human dignity.

Article 31 — Education Without Inherited Hatred

Schools should teach difficult history.

Dictatorship.

Repression.

Political violence.

State abuse.

Democratic transition.

Victims.

Political movements.

Competing interpretations.

But education should not assign hereditary guilt.

The child must inherit knowledge.

Not enemies.

Article 32 — Voluntary Reconciliation

Reconciliation cannot be commanded.

Victims should not be forced to forgive.

Former enemies should not be forced into theatrical encounters.

Where dialogue occurs, it should be voluntary, carefully facilitated, and oriented toward truth and human recognition.

The state can create opportunities.

It cannot manufacture forgiveness.

Part IX

Federal and Confederal Possibilities

Article 33 — Flexible Constitutional Imagination

The nation-state should not be treated as the only imaginable political form.

Possible arrangements include:

federation,

asymmetrical federalism,

confederation,

associated statehood,

regional autonomy,

cross-border cultural institutions,

and shared sovereignty.

Moshe Reed Thought rejects constitutional dogmatism.

Political forms should serve human beings.

Article 34 — Cross-Border Cultural Cooperation

Cultural communities divided by state borders should be able to cooperate peacefully through lawful institutions.

Universities.

Language organizations.

Cultural associations.

Municipal partnerships.

Research institutions.

Economic projects.

A border need not erase cultural relationship.

Cultural unity does not automatically require centralized political sovereignty.

Article 35 — Subsidiarity

Decisions should be made at the lowest practical level capable of handling them effectively.

The household should not control regional infrastructure.

The central government should not decide the location of every neighborhood bench.

Scale matters.

Subsidiarity is not absolute localism.

It is disciplined attention to the appropriate level of decision-making.

Article 36 — Solidarity Across Regions

Decentralization must not become abandonment.

Regions remain economically interconnected.

The commonwealth requires mechanisms of solidarity.

Disaster assistance.

Infrastructure cooperation.

Social guarantees.

Environmental coordination.

Fiscal equalization where democratically agreed.

Freedom should not become a privilege of wealthy territories.

Part X

The Transition to Commonwealth

Article 37 — Begin With Existing Institutions

The commonwealth need not wait for a perfect constitutional moment.

Municipalities can expand participation.

Workers can build cooperatives.

Regions can improve transparency.

Schools can strengthen cultural education.

Communities can establish land trusts.

The future begins through available openings.

Article 38 — Prefer Construction Over Spectacle

Political movements often seek dramatic moments.

Moshe Reed Thought prefers durable capacity.

A functioning cooperative is more valuable than a thousand slogans about worker power.

A successful language school is more valuable than romantic declarations about cultural survival.

A transparent municipality is more valuable than rhetoric about people's power.

The institution is the test of the slogan.

Article 39 — Measure Power, Not Symbols Alone

Every reform should be evaluated concretely.

Who gained decision-making authority?

Who gained ownership?

Who gained security?

Who gained access?

Who became more capable of participation?

Who remained excluded?

Symbolic victories matter emotionally.

Institutional victories matter materially.

The commonwealth requires both meaning and structure.

Article 40 — Preserve the Right to Revise

No constitutional arrangement should declare history permanently finished.

Future generations will face new conditions.

They must be able to revise institutions peacefully.

The commonwealth is not a final system.

It is a method of organized self-correction.

Its greatest strength is not perfection.

It is the capacity to change without civil war.

The Commonwealth Formula

Moshe Reed Thought summarizes the program in seven principles:

Local power without isolation.

Regional autonomy without exclusion.

Federation without domination.

Economic democracy without bureaucratic command.

Cultural confidence without chauvinism.

Public security without lawlessness.

Political struggle without armed substitution.

These principles do not eliminate conflict.

They civilize conflict.

They move disagreement away from clandestine violence and toward institutions capable of revision.

Concluding Declaration

The national question cannot be solved by forcing every people into the same constitutional model.

Nor can it be solved by assuming that every cultural identity requires a centralized nation-state.

Human political life is more complex.

People belong to overlapping communities.

A person can be attached to a town, a region, a language, a nation, and a wider federation simultaneously.

The commonwealth does not demand that one identity destroy the others.

It seeks a political architecture in which belonging can be layered.

The goal is not a world without borders, institutions, or political authority.

The goal is a world in which these structures remain accountable to the people living within them.

The central principle is simple:

Power should exist at the scale where people can meaningfully participate, while cooperation should extend as widely as shared problems require.

This is the commonwealth alternative to both centralized nationalism and armed separatism.

It offers no final utopia.

It offers something more practical:

a political order capable of disagreement without war,

self-government without isolation,

solidarity without uniformity,

and transformation without the worship of violence.

The national question becomes democratic when the people themselves become more important than every organization claiming to speak for them.

The commonwealth begins there.

Appendix VI

Questions for Study, Discussion, and Political Education

This appendix is designed for reading groups, political education circles, classrooms, community organizations, historical study groups, and independent readers.

The questions are intended to encourage analysis rather than ideological conformity.

Moshe Reed Thought begins from the principle that political education should produce independent judgment.

A study group should not manufacture followers.

A teacher should not create intellectual dependency.

A political organization should not fear questions.

The purpose of study is to increase the capacity of people to examine history, recognize contradictions, compare institutions, judge methods, and participate intelligently in collective life.

The questions below may be used individually or collectively.

They do not require agreement.

They require thought.

Part I

Historical Origins

1. What political and cultural conditions contributed to the formation of ETA in 1959?
2. How did the Franco dictatorship shape Basque political identity?
3. What is the difference between explaining why a movement emerged and justifying everything the movement later did?
4. Why are historical context and moral judgment both necessary?

5. How did restrictions upon language and cultural expression affect Basque nationalism?
6. Why might younger activists become dissatisfied with established nationalist organizations?
7. How did international anti-colonial and revolutionary movements influence European radical politics during the twentieth century?
8. What dangers arise when a movement adopts a foreign revolutionary model without fully considering local conditions?
9. How can cultural revival become political radicalization?
10. Under what conditions can cultural repression strengthen rather than eliminate national identity?

Part II

Nationalism and Identity

11. What makes a nation?
12. Is a nation defined by language, ancestry, territory, citizenship, historical memory, political will, or some combination of these?
13. Can a person belong to several national or cultural communities simultaneously?

14. What is the difference between patriotism and chauvinism?
15. What does Moshe Reed Thought mean by plural patriotism?
16. Can a national movement remain authentically national while accepting internal disagreement?
17. Who has the authority to define the boundaries of a nation?
18. What happens when cultural geography and political geography do not correspond?
19. Can cultural unity exist without political centralization?
20. Under what circumstances might regional autonomy be preferable to complete independence?
21. Under what circumstances might independence be democratically justified?
22. How should the preferences of internal minorities be protected during national self-determination processes?
23. Can a nationalist movement become oppressive toward members of the nation who reject nationalism?
24. What does it mean to say that the nation exists for human beings rather than human beings existing for the nation?

Part III

Revolutionary Ideology

25. What is revolutionary nationalism?
26. How does revolutionary nationalism differ from conservative nationalism?
27. Why have some national liberation movements adopted socialist ideology?
28. Can national liberation occur without economic transformation?
29. Can socialist transformation occur without national independence?
30. What is the relationship between class identity and national identity?
31. Can class politics and national politics strengthen one another?
32. Can they conflict?
33. What is a revolutionary vanguard?
34. What are the strongest arguments for a vanguard organization?
35. What are the dangers of permanent vanguardism?
36. What does Moshe Reed Thought mean by substitutionism?
37. How can an organization claim to represent the people without replacing the people?
38. What institutional mechanisms can prevent leadership from becoming permanent guardianship?
39. Should revolutionary organizations practice internal democracy during periods of repression?
40. What risks and benefits would such internal democracy create?

Part IV

Armed Struggle

41. Under what historical conditions have movements adopted armed struggle?
42. Is armed resistance against dictatorship morally different from armed activity within a functioning democracy?
43. How should a movement reassess its methods when political conditions change?
44. Can a tactic become an organizational identity?
45. What does Moshe Reed Thought mean by the theology of violence?
46. Why can martyrdom traditions make strategic change difficult?
47. Does sacrifice prove that a cause is correct?
48. What is the difference between courage and wisdom?
49. Can a courageous act still be politically or morally wrong?
50. Why might dramatic violence appear more revolutionary than slow institutional construction?
51. Is immediacy the same as effectiveness?
52. How should political movements measure whether their methods actually advance their goals?
53. What is the moral importance of civilian immunity?

54. How should intention and foreseeable consequence be distinguished?
55. Can warnings remove responsibility for foreseeable civilian deaths?
56. When does collateral harm reveal a deeper failure in strategy?
57. What happens when an organization becomes dependent upon the methods it originally treated as temporary?

Part V

The State and Counterterrorism

58. What responsibilities does a democratic state have when confronting political violence?
59. Does terrorism justify exceptional state powers?
60. If exceptional powers are created, what mechanisms should limit them?
61. Why is torture incompatible with democratic legitimacy?
62. What is reciprocal degradation?
63. How can state lawlessness strengthen the propaganda of an armed movement?
64. What lessons can be drawn from the GAL period?

65. Why do secret state institutions present a particular danger to democracy?
66. Should state officials receive greater punishment when they abuse public authority?
67. What is the relationship between security and public trust?
68. Can aggressive security policies produce short-term effectiveness while creating long-term political damage?
69. How should democratic societies investigate abuses committed by their own institutions?
70. What does it mean to say that the state must obey the law it claims to defend?

Part VI

The Democratic Test

71. What changes when a dictatorship becomes a parliamentary democracy?
72. Does democratization automatically resolve national conflict?
73. Can a political question remain unresolved while peaceful political space expands?
74. What burden does this place upon an armed movement?

75. How can the quality of democratic political space be evaluated?
76. Are elections alone sufficient?
77. Why does Moshe Reed Thought argue for democracy in the workplace and economy?
78. What does it mean for a movement to accept the possibility of political defeat?
79. Why is the right to lose important?
80. Can a movement be democratic if it accepts elections only when it wins?
81. How can an independence movement pursue radical goals through peaceful institutions?
82. Can civil resistance be revolutionary?
83. What advantages does mass participation possess over clandestine action?
84. What limitations can civil resistance face under severe repression?
85. How should strategy change as the political environment changes?

Part VII

Fear and Social Life

86. What does it mean to describe violence as a climate?
87. How does fear alter ordinary political behavior?

88. Can silence be interpreted as consent in a society shaped by intimidation?
89. What is social exile?
90. How can a person become isolated without physically leaving a community?
91. How does political conflict enter family life?
92. How are children affected by political atmospheres they do not fully understand?
93. What are the invisible casualties of prolonged conflict?
94. How does fear affect journalism?
95. How does fear affect political participation?
96. How does fear affect business and employment decisions?
97. How can societies rebuild trust after violence declines?
98. Why can fear survive after attacks stop?
99. What institutions are necessary for social recovery?
100. Can friendship across political disagreement be considered a form of civic reconstruction?

Part VIII

Financing and Shadow Sovereignty

101. What is the difference between voluntary political contribution and coercive financing?
102. Can an armed organization legitimately claim the right to tax?
103. What does Moshe Reed Thought mean by shadow sovereignty?
104. How can non-state organizations begin behaving like unaccountable states?
105. Can states themselves create forms of shadow sovereignty?
106. Why is the right of refusal central to judging political relationships?
107. How does coercive financing affect workers connected to targeted businesses?
108. What alternatives exist for financing social movements?
109. How can cooperatives, unions, and mutual-aid institutions support long-term political transformation?
110. Why does Moshe Reed Thought consider financing a form of moral education?

Part IX

Negotiation and Ceasefire

111. Is negotiation with an armed adversary a form of surrender?
112. Under what conditions should governments communicate with violent organizations?
113. What issues can an armed organization legitimately negotiate?
114. Can an armed organization negotiate constitutional sovereignty on behalf of an entire population?
115. What is the difference between an instrumental pause and transformative cessation?
116. Why do failed ceasefires damage future peace efforts?
117. What role should victims have in peace processes?
118. How should prisoner issues be addressed without erasing individual responsibility?
119. Why can stopping violence require courage?
120. What political and psychological barriers make disarmament difficult?
121. Should peace processes include mechanisms for reintegration?
122. How can reintegration occur without denying justice?
123. What is the danger of humiliating a defeated or declining adversary?
124. How can former enemies become ordinary political opponents?

Part X

Memory and Reconciliation

125. What is the purpose of historical memory?
126. Can memory preserve truth without producing inherited hatred?
127. What does Moshe Reed Thought mean by reconciliatory memory?
128. Is forgiveness necessary for peace?
129. Who has the right to forgive?
130. Can the state demand reconciliation from victims?
131. How should schools teach politically contested history?
132. What is the difference between historical responsibility and hereditary guilt?
133. Should descendants feel responsible for crimes committed before their birth?
134. How can public memorials recognize victims without becoming instruments of political mobilization?
135. Can societies recognize different categories of suffering without creating false equivalence?
136. What role should archives and historical scholarship play in post-conflict societies?
137. How can myths of complete innocence damage political traditions?
138. Why should movements study their own failures?

Part XI

Economic Democracy

139. Why does Moshe Reed Thought connect national liberation with worker ownership?
140. Can an independent nation remain economically dependent?
141. What forms of economic power can survive political independence?
142. What is the difference between state ownership and worker ownership?
143. What advantages and difficulties are associated with worker cooperatives?
144. What role can unions play in a democratic commonwealth?
145. How can community land trusts reduce displacement?
146. Should regional governments operate public development banks?
147. How can public investment remain democratically accountable?
148. What policies can reduce oligarchic concentration without creating excessive bureaucracy?
149. How should local autonomy be balanced with economic solidarity between regions?

150. Can economic democracy reduce the appeal of violent revolutionary politics?

Part XII

Commonwealth Political Theory

151. What is the commonwealth?
152. How does it differ from a centralized socialist state?
153. How does it differ from laissez-faire capitalism?
154. How does it differ from a unitary nationalist state?
155. What is subsidiarity?
156. What kinds of decisions should be made locally?
157. What kinds of decisions require regional coordination?
158. What kinds of problems require federal or international cooperation?
159. How can power be decentralized without creating inequality between territories?
160. How can solidarity be maintained without unnecessary centralization?
161. What is layered sovereignty?
162. Can a person belong politically to several overlapping communities?

163. How can cross-border cultural communities cooperate without territorial conflict?
164. What institutions can make constitutional change possible without violence?
165. Is the nation-state the final form of political organization?

Part XIII

Institutional Ethics

166. Why do institutions seek survival?
167. What is institutional momentum?
168. How can an organization distinguish the survival of the cause from the survival of itself?
169. When should an organization dissolve?
170. Can dissolution be a political success?
171. How can leadership prepare an institution for transformation or closure?
172. Why is transparency important?
173. What forms of accountability should exist inside political organizations?
174. Can secrecy ever be justified?
175. How should necessary secrecy be prevented from becoming permanent culture?

176. What does it mean to say that institutions must be capable of dying?
177. Which contemporary institutions might benefit from asking whether their original purpose still exists?

Part XIV

Applying the Framework Beyond the Basque Conflict

178. Which principles developed in this book can be applied to other national liberation movements?
179. Which principles should not be mechanically transferred without attention to context?
180. How should differences between colonial occupation, dictatorship, regional nationalism, and democratic separatism affect analysis?
181. Can the Moshe Reed framework be applied to states as well as revolutionary movements?
182. Can it be applied to political parties?
183. Can it be applied to corporations?
184. Can it be applied to religious institutions?
185. What does the right of refusal reveal about power in everyday life?

186. Where does shadow sovereignty appear outside armed political movements?
187. How can the concept of substitutionism help analyze bureaucratic organizations?
188. How can the commonwealth principle be applied to workplace governance?
189. What institutions in your own community distribute power?
190. What institutions concentrate it?

Part XV

Final Seminar Questions

191. Was ETA's emergence historically understandable?
192. At what point did its strategy become increasingly disconnected from changing political conditions?
193. Could the organization have transformed earlier into a purely political movement?
194. What prevented earlier transformation?
195. How did state abuses affect the conflict?
196. How did civilian suffering affect ETA's legitimacy?
197. What role did social mobilization play in rejecting violence?

198. Why did armed activity eventually end?
199. What lessons should democratic states learn from the conflict?
200. What lessons should revolutionary movements learn?
201. Can a cause survive the dissolution of the organization most associated with it?
202. What does the history teach about the difference between a people and a movement?
203. What does the history teach about the difference between peace and victory?
204. What does the history teach about the relationship between memory and identity?
205. Which principle of Moshe Reed Thought is most strongly supported by this history?
206. Which principle requires further development or criticism?
207. Where might Moshe Reed Thought underestimate the difficulties of political struggle?
208. Where might it offer a useful alternative to both state centralism and armed vanguardism?
209. What would a democratic commonwealth look like in practice?
210. What can ordinary people build now?

Suggested Reading-Group Method

A Moshe Reed Thought reading group should not operate as a doctrinal school.

Participants should be encouraged to disagree.

One participant may defend national independence.

Another may defend federalism.

Another may prefer autonomy.

Another may criticize nationalism entirely.

The purpose is not forced agreement.

A productive study session can follow a simple pattern.

First, establish the historical facts under discussion.

Second, identify the competing interpretations.

Third, identify the institutions involved.

Fourth, ask who possessed power.

Fifth, ask who could refuse.

Sixth, examine the methods used.

Seventh, consider alternative strategies.

Eighth, ask what institutions could have distributed power more effectively.

The final question should always be practical:

What can be built?

Political Education Without Indoctrination

Moshe Reed Thought rejects indoctrination.

Indoctrination teaches conclusions without teaching the ability to examine them.

Political education should do the opposite.

It should teach people to:

read critically,

compare sources,

identify propaganda,

distinguish evidence from assertion,

recognize emotional manipulation,

understand historical context,

judge institutions,

question leadership,

and revise conclusions.

A political movement afraid of educated disagreement does not want citizens.

It wants followers.

The commonwealth requires citizens.

Final Study Principle

The history of political conflict should not be studied to discover which flag deserves unconditional loyalty.

It should be studied to understand power.

Who claimed to speak for the people?

How was that claim tested?

Who could disagree?

Who controlled resources?

Who used violence?

Who investigated abuse?

Who benefited from secrecy?

Who paid the cost of strategic decisions?

Who was remembered?

Who was forgotten?

Who had the ability to leave?

Who had the ability to say no?

These questions can be applied to the state.

The party.

The corporation.

The armed organization.

The church.

The union.

The cooperative.

The municipality.

And the commonwealth itself.

No institution is beyond examination.

That is the final purpose of political education:

not to create perfect certainty,

but to create people capable of governing shared life without surrendering judgment to those who claim to think on their behalf.